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COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 74
Dec. 1999

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Gil Kane!

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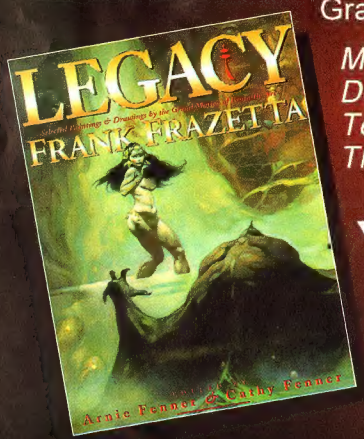

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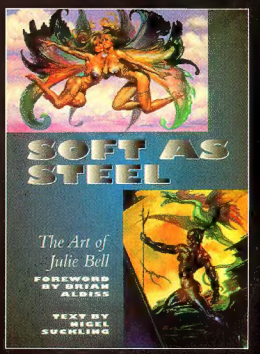

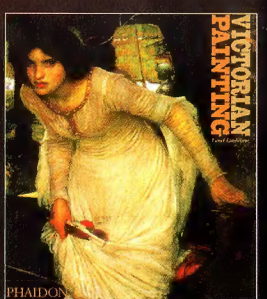

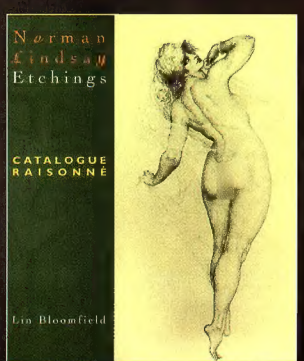

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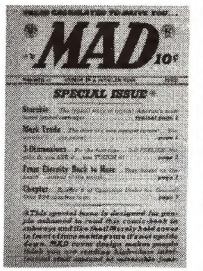

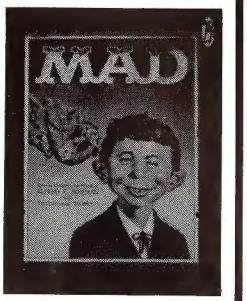

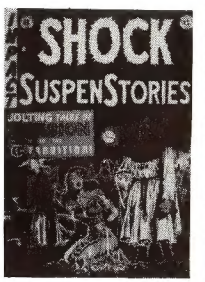

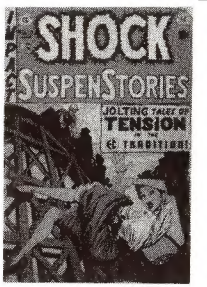

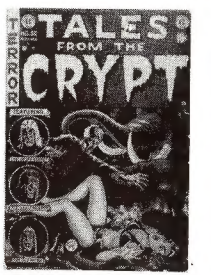

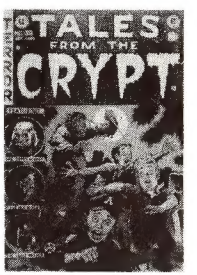

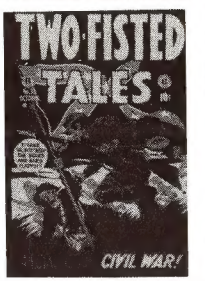

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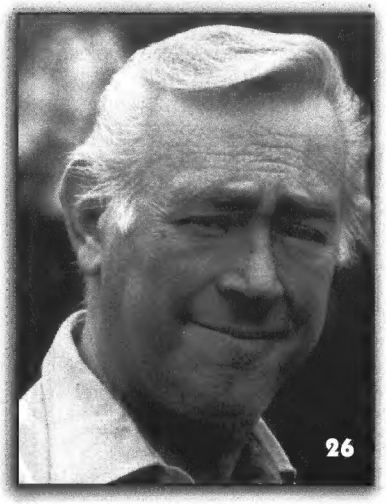

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ON THE COVER: The original art for the cover of the Silver Age Green Lantern #1 (Jul/Aug 1960), penciled by Gil Kane and inked by Murphy Anderson **ON THE BACK COVER:** A closeup of the Howard Purcell art used on the cover of the Golden Age Green Lantern #1 (Fall 1941) **BELOW:** A closeup of Gil Kane's original art for the cover of Strange Adventures #17 (Feb 1952)

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It's the Water...

My brother, Lane, and I were sitting at our table during a San Diego Con back in the 1980s, in the days when they still held it at the community concourse. Suddenly Lane nudged me with his elbow and whispered excitedly, "Gary! Over there, next to Julie Schwartz... it's Gil Kane!" I looked over in the direction Lane had indicated and there stood Kane amidst a cadre of fellow DC greats, a legend among legends. Back when I was a kid, I'd marveled time and again over Gil Kane's art and, staring across that Con floor in the dealers' room, my thoughts flashed back to those childhood moments. I particularly recalled a Silver Age day at the end of fifth grade Christmas vacation... during the first week of January, 1960. That day, like so many others during my childhood, I was prowling the aisles of the Corrin Drugstore, the same pharmacy where I had purchased my first comic book in 1957. As I twirled the spinner rack, I caught the vibrant colors of *Strange Adventures* #113 as it spun into view, a cover which is featured in the centerfold of this month's *CBM*. The cover was easy to spot with its gargantuan, wild-eyed green and purple alien... its scaly, dripping tentacle grasping the helpless Empire State Building. My mind filled with questions. "Was the world being destroyed by a flood just like in the Bible?" "Was there a fiendish extraterrestrial plot to conquer Earth with our own oceans?"

What ten-year-old fifth grader could resist "The Deluge From Space!"? Certainly not me! I grabbed the new issue, walked swiftly to the counter, and plunked down my dime. Then I folded the comic neatly in half, lengthwise, stuffed it securely under my shirt and tucked down the front of my jeans to "keep it safe" and hurriedly bicycled home to read my new prize!

Arriving at home, I found my favorite spot on the couch, dropped down onto the cushions, arranged the comic in front of me, and stared. What a great cover! What was it about that picture that was so fascinating I couldn't stop staring at it?

All of a sudden, I realized what it was... it was the water... Gil Kane's water... water that looked like it had a personality and life of its own... water that communicated malevolence and potential harm. The spiked crests of the waves and the dark underside of the foam set a threatening tone both for the castaways in the boat, but also for the reader. Kane's way of depicting water ultimately made more of an impression on me than the alien or the skyscraper.

Kane had created an entrancing cover, its main elements perfectly united by those sinister waves. As the din of the convention crowd rose, my childhood flashback faded away and I returned to reality. Without wasting a moment, I grabbed the longbox marked "S," located a copy of *Strange Adventures* #113, and strode across the dealers' room floor to Gil.

"You don't know me," I said to him, "but my name's Gary and I've been a fan of yours since the day this comic hit the stands more than 20 years ago!" Gil and Julie Schwartz, sitting side by side, both glanced at the comic... then they glanced at each other... and then both men chuckled, in a knowing sort of way. Julie started telling me about how their first step was developing appealing cover ideas, and that only later the inside stories were written to fit. Gil discussed his artistic style, saying that he'd done better work since those halcyon days... and then Gil politely autographed my copy of #113.

I spent several hours with Gil on that wonderful morning, listening to his stories about fellow artists, absorbing every detail of his discussion of drawing technique and style and mesmerized by his fresh insights into the inner workings of the comic book industry. Gil forever changed my way of viewing comic book history. There was a new way to see it... the Gil Kane way. It was an encounter I'll never forget.

Ever since *CBM* started, I've wanted to do a tribute to Gil Kane and his legendary work, and with this last issue of the 1990s that wish has finally come true. Thanks for all the great art, Gil! And thanks for the education and the insider's history of comics too.

But most of all, thanks for all the great covers full of wild-eyed aliens and the special way that you drew water... which, after all these years, still seems to foam right off the page! Your covers continue to captivate me– even after they're folded in half lengthwise, stuffed under my shirt and tucked inside my jeans for the bike ride home!

Gary

Gary M. Carter

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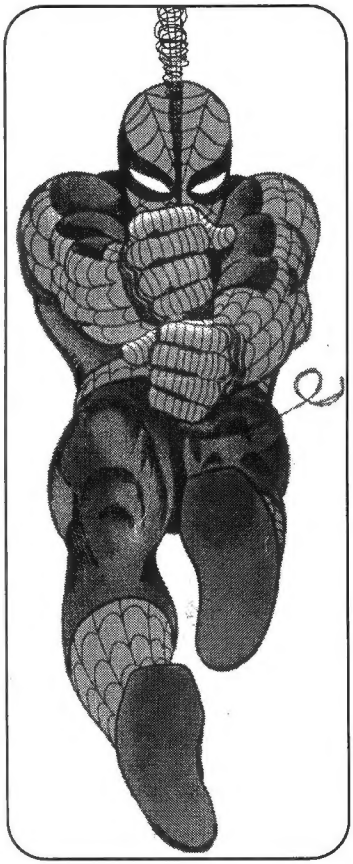

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Mysterious Stranger ashcan

Enjoyed the piece on DC ashcans in CBM #71. I think I can shed some light on why there exists both a Phantom Stranger and a Mysterious Stranger ashcan. A few years ago, Julie Schwartz informed me that DC editor-in-chief Whitney Ellsworth assigned him a new supernatural character inspired, Ellsworth said, by Mark Twain's short story, "The Mysterious Stranger." Ultimately, the assignment was published as The Phantom Stranger.

I would guess that a decision was made, somewhere between concept and execution, to give the character a new name. The Mysterious Stranger ashcan may have come before the change—unless Ellsworth hedging his bets and trademarked the original character name to preempt any rival publisher from copying their Phantom Stranger.

Incidentally, Julie couldn't recall who wrote the first Phantom Stranger story, but wondered if it might have been Weird Tales writer Manley Wade Wellman.

Will Murray, Massachusetts

Jumbo Comic Book Mystery

Gary Colabuono's research and his ashcan collection is utterly fantastic (CBM #71). It got me to thinking about an unusual 1979 item I have. I've had it for about 12 years or more… I originally purchased it at a comic book show. Although it is not an ashcan, it is quite different and is not listed in any price guide. I have never seen another copy.

Here's the description: Jumbo Comic Book. Moby Books. Playmore, Inc. Pub. Under Arrangement with Waldman Pub. Corp., N.Y. N.Y. MCMLXXIX. Price on cover: $7.95, 448 pages. Size: 8¼" wide 11" tall. The entire issue is in full color.

It is a solid issue of funny animal features and looks like they are reprints from old Coo Coo, Joker, etc. with comics starring Sniffy, Dopsy Durvy, Sponky, Bill and Coo, etc. The artists are Jim Adams, Al Fago, J.C.A., Milt Hammer, Abbey, C. W. Winter, Marty Taras, B. Baker, etc. and the inside front and back covers are blank!

Does any CBMer know about this one?

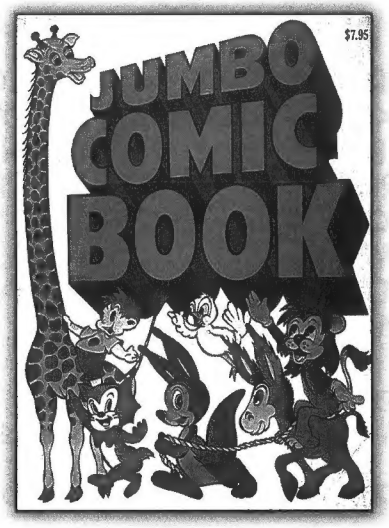
Norral Johnson, Oregon

The book to which you refer was published by the famous Israel Waldman of IW/Super fame (Mr. Waldman passed away a few years ago… in 1996). You're right, the book does appear to contain reprints from early funny animal comics, which I believe we could track down using the splash pages. But the most amazing thing to me is that such early material was reprinted as late as 1979! Maybe an astute CBM reader can shed additional light on this intriguing… and huge… comic book novelty. Thanks for sharing it.

Carving up Superman

The articles in CBM #71 on DC's early ashcans and the "Bronze Age Implosions" were excellent. However, the issue begged for a feature on the "Canceled Comic Cavalcade" ashcans produced by DC, consisting of photocopied art from the many titles canceled in 1978.

One aspect of Marvel's various cancellations during this time involved the Giant-Sized series, starting as Giant-Sized Superstars #1



featuring the Fantastic Four, whose success led to its demise. The Giant-Sized titles featured 1) mostly new stories, and 2) a high page count. With a 50-60¢ cover price and quarterly publication, these comics were a great value for the readers' money. It wasn't too long before the Marvel management concluded that the series was eating into the sales of the regular 25¢ titles, and thus the Giant-Sized titles were demoted during 1975 to all-reprint status, before being canceled and superseded by a new series of Marvel Annuals that would supplement the regular series.

Some highlight issues include the Conan (the King) sagas and a Defenders giant that featured Daredevil as a ally, a life-size chess game against the Magus, and a few pages which deviated from the traditional comic book panel format into text-only pages matched with well thought-out page-sized illustrations.

Regarding CBM Newsbrief, "Carving up Superman," the article was fascinating for its coverage of the legal issues that have historically lurked in the background of the comic book publishing business. I feel CBM would benefit from time to time by inclusion of investigative articles such as this fine one.

In closing, just a minor correction regarding the "Superman's Merfolk" article in CBM #63 (this being Lori Lemaris' 40th anniversary year, how could I resist?): Lori's appearance in Superman #135 was titled "Superman's Mermaid Sweetheart" not "Superman's Sweetheart."

M. L. "Myls" Putnam, New York

Mougin mail!

Regarding your Letter From The Editor in CBM #73… apparently, Carl Burgos went to edit those terrible, terrible horror mags for Country-Wide, which, I think, was owned by Myron Fass, shortly after leaving Marvel in 1964 or so. He came back for a very short stint drawing the Human Torch in Strange Tales, but it apparently didn't work out.

The books were, as far as I can tell, virtually all reprints from schlocky horror books of the '50s. The covers were unspeakably bad. I have no idea how Robert Farrell entered the picture with Weird, but lots of small one-shot black & whites were published from the early '60s all the way through the early '70s, Crime Machine, Hell-Rider, etc.

My guess is that the Fass outfit may have been the ones Warren was trying to beat out with the Eerie title. Ironically enough, IW/Super used Eerie as the title for one of their horror reprint books in the early '60s, only a year or two before Warren brought his mag out, but I have no idea if Israel Waldman, who repackaged all that Golden Age/ early '50s material, would have contended the claim. Probably not.

Lou Mougin, Texas

Bottom of the barrel

Just got CBM #73 in the mail the other day... another fine issue. Nice to see 'balance' in the issue... a good Silver Age article on Showcase plus pre-Code horror covered and Atom Age info. About the only people left shorthanded were the GA fans!

I enjoyed the Atom Age the most, as it's what I grew up with—I'm 57 years old. Too many issues that you've published seem to focus mostly on Silver and Bronze Age material. I think most of us enjoy reading about an area of comics fandom that we're already well-acquainted with; the purpose of any magazine such as yours should be to inform and entertain us and give even more info on the areas we enjoy the most.

You're not going to please every reader 100% with the contents of each and every issue, but I think you guys hit the mark more than miss it, and that's why I subscribe!

As to your request for more info on the b&w shock publishers—you're right. There were two companies: Eerie Publications and Stanley Publications.

Stanley had four titles: Chilling Tales of Horror, Shock, Ghoul Tales, and Stark Terror. These were all reprints, much from ACG, but also some from Gilmour/Aragon. They also had a magazine called Horror Stories which I've only seen one issue of—there were, I think, six or eight issues total. This title contains text horror stories, jazzed up with some b&w photos—don't know if the photos are 'posed by professional models' variety or it they're leftover movie scenes and footage; pix are lurid, as you would expect, but not pornographic. The four titles above are listed in Overstreet CBPG; Horror Stories is not. The Stanley mags date from 1969-1971.

Eerie Publications: these started out in 1965. Weird is one title; there's also Horror Tales, Witches' Tales, Tales from the Tomb, Terror Tales, Weird Worlds and Strange Galaxy. The early issues (1965-1971) are mostly Farrell reprints; around 1970-71, they mixed new stories and Farrell reprints for content; some of the Farrell stories were reprinted 3-4 times.

The new stuff they did is pitiful—emphasis is on as much gore and blood as possible, and the writing and art come pretty damn close to hitting the bottom of the barrel. True crap, but someone must've bought it, as these hung on until 1974 or so. Weird Worlds and Strange Galaxy, the few issues I've seen at least, tend to emphasize science fiction stories. All of the info about dates, etc. can, once again, be found in the Overstreet CBPG.

As to 'permission to reprint' the pre-Code stories—I've heard various stories from various people on this. Maybe these fell into the area of public domain, or possibly Robert W. Farrell had these stories hanging around in inventory somehow and decided to reprint them and make some more money by reprinting the stories. Was

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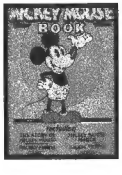

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he the rightful owner? How did Carl Burgos get involved as editor? I don't know.

As for the Stanley titles, keep in mind that the reprints are not all from ACG—there was quite a bit of Aragon/Gilmour material used, too. How did they get hold of these? Was Richard Hughes involved directly? No one's talking. Were these reprints obtained legally? I've heard they were stolen, but I'm certainly in no position to confirm or deny this—I'm pretty much just passing on what I've heard from others, and I have no way of knowing how reliable their sources of information were.

Ah yes, the cover art! Here, I'd give a small edge to Stanley's people—these covers at least look like a little time was spent on them—cover subjects look more or less like human beings and the monsters look fairly 'monstrous,' not just stupid. Eerie Publications led the way in gore for gore's sake and making the cover as crude and garish as possible, plus the artwork looks like very little time was spent on it—strictly hacked out, loaded with blurbs (especially true after 1971) and no restraints whatsoever. Yet these did 'grace' the newsstands in the '60s and '70s; how many were bought by parents for their children to read is definitely open to quite a bit of speculation!

These covers and contents almost made the pre-Code guys look tame by comparison! Taste wasn't a factor—salability was the #1 thing.

I hope this provides the info you were seeking.

Jeff Patton, Ohio

Wonder Woman strip

In response to Carl Horak's letter regarding the Wonder Woman strip, I have inexpensive back issues for sale of Comic Strip News #1-11, 13-15 ("Chapters" #1-6... there were 6 , not 4) for $2 each. Besides the Wonder Woman strip reprints, CSN also contains other strips such as Secret Agent Corrigan (Williamson and Goodwin), Mandrake, Terry, Vickie Dare, Orphan Annie, Popeye, etc.

Larry Charet, Illinois
(773) 274-1832

In the little yellow box!

Was reading your fascinating article on DC ashcans when I came across the sidebar "Mystery Trail" listing on page 34. The note about the aborted title having been advertised only once (Adventures of Alan Ladd #9) struck a chord. I distinctly remembered having run across mention of the comic in one of my recent purchases and remarking on it to my girlfriend, Tammy. I checked my sanity against her memory and came up clean.

So, she helped me dig around until we came upon Real Screen Comics #35. Lo and behold, there the Mystery Trail listing was in the little yellow box!

If to no one else, I figured at least the author and CBM readers might be interested in that little bit of minutiae.

Darin Lietz & Tammy Belles, Washington

Now you've done it... you've discovered another mention of Mystery Trail in a little list-of-DC-publications yellow box in an issue other than Adventures of Alan Ladd #9! Now the quest begins. How many other titles may have carried the premature listing for Mystery Trail? I'm losing sleep over this!

Writer #4,000!

Regarding the caption at the bottom of page 19 in CBM #73... I'm doubtless the four thousandth person to write and say, surely, you jest. Gladys Parker a "pseudonym"? Who said? Where... oh where in the everlovin' blue-eyed world... did you get the idea that Gladys was an invention? Or are you merely perpetrating the hoax of the season?

Truth be told, for a moment there, I thought something drastic had happened to comics history while I was out of the room. But, no. I checked with Trina Robbins, just to see if I'd somehow slipped off the planet into some parallel universe somewhere else, and she confirms that Gladys Parker is really a person of the female persuasion.

Trina sez: "Hilda Terry knew and remembers her: she was a drinker, says Hilda, but she met her deadlines. When Hilda and Gladys and a bunch of other women cartoonists entertained the troops in 1949 with the NCS, Gladys did a dance in a black leotard painted with white bones that glowed in black light so when the light was turned off and the black light turned on, it looked like a skeleton dancing. Died of cancer. Plus she was married to Slapsy Maxie Rosenbloom, the prize fighter."

It would require a conspiracy of some dimensions to maintain the "fiction" of Gladys Parker under these circumstances. Although I suppose

anybody could have worn the skeleton leotard and danced: it was, after all, in a darkened room.

According to her entry in the National Cartoonists Society album (1972 edition), she was born in Tonawanda, New York, and started selling cartoons to magazines while still in high school. She started her career with the New York Graphic and soon took over Flapper Fanny from Ethel Hays after the latter married and started a family. During the 1930s, she'd run through a number of features of her own, finishing in about 1936-37 with Mopsy, which she conducted until it ceased and with which she is most closely associated. (Mopsy even looks like Parker.) Parker also drew Flyin' Jenny for a time during World War II. She also wrote a column, "Dear Gals and Guys," and lived in Hollywood "with two black cats."

Now, Parker may, indeed, be a fiction, but this kind of biographical data is awfully hard to manufacture. So I, at least—and Trina, too—persist in thinking Gladys Parker was an actual person.

But you were kidding, right? It was a hoax, eh?

R. C. Harvey, Illinois

Not kidding... not a hoax... it was (gulp) the editor making a total fool of himself writing captions for someone else's column without double checking his research first! So let me start my 4,000 apologies with one to Michelle for screwing up a graphic caption in an otherwise excellent article... one to the family of Gladys Parker for unintentionally sabotaging her due credit in history... and one to you, R.C., for blowin' it big time! I throw myself on the mercy of the CBM jury and hope that the court of public opinion grants leniency... instead of (gasp) the headman's axe!

35¢ Dell Giant price variants

Gary Colabuono's letter in CBM, and the editorial response, concerning a Dell Giant comic which had a 30¢ cover price was somewhat surprising, since I thought it was widely-known that all or most 1950's Dell Giants distributed in Canada had something other than a 25¢ cover price. Gary's Pogo Parade is likely a Canadian edition.

To re-verify this, I pulled several titles of 1950's Dell Giants, spotted 23 different issues which had 30¢ (or 35¢) cover prices: Bugs Bunny (9), Christmas Parade (1), Little Lulu (2), Man in Space, Silly Symphonies (1), Tom and Jerry (3) and Woody Woodpecker (6).

The Man in Space was the only "consecutive series" issue I noticed which had a non-25¢ cover price.

Aside from the cover price, none of these books seem to differ in any way from the U.S. versions. It is standard practice to discount Canadian editions, with the amount of discount depending on how significant the differences are. Since the cover price variation is such a minor difference, probably little or no discount from the Overstreet price would be warranted.

Stan Molson, Ontario, Canada

While you were checking issues did you by any chance notice whether any of the Canadian price variant issues carried ads on the back cover? Dell Giant collectors have long known that there were two versions of many of the later Giants... *(Continued on page 76)*

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Thrice Transformed Title!

By Pat S. Calhoun

It wasn't unusual for a comic book to change its title—sometimes jumping to a different genre—in the early 1950s, because it was important both to keep on top of the trends and to keep alive that second-class mailing permit. But of all the myriad sci-fi/fantasy/horror titles from those years Youthful Magazines' *Captain Science* stands out with four titles in a 17-issue run. The contents changed from SF with a continuing lead character to SF/horror, and then the last two titles were pure horror. Issues #1-7 were *Captain Science*, #8 and 9 were *Fantastic*, #10-12 were *Beware*, and #13-17 came out as *Chilling Tales*. The run is distinguished by nice Joe Orlando/Wally Wood art in the early issues, and great Matt Fox covers on three of the five *Chilling Tales*, as well as a story drawn by the fabulous Fox in #13. The *Chilling* issues are also notable for a number of excellent adaptations of classic horror tales by Poe and Rudyard Kipling and Sir Walter Scott. One tale even contains a free-wheeling yarn inspired by Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

Youthful was one of the boom publishers that rose up during the industry's peak and faded when the censorship crisis of 1954 precipitated a plunge in sales. Harry Harrison was involved as author and artist throughout the run, and he went on from there to become a prolific science fiction writer. *Captain Science* #5 (August 1951) comes wrapped with a handsome Orlando/Wood cover and features two "O/W"-drawn Captain Science stories. They're good looking but suffer from "gosh-wow space opera syndrome" which throws a little colorful paraphernalia into very tired plot formulas.

In the first yarn, "Time Door of Throm," the three adventurers—Cap, his fiancee Luana, and young pal Rip—thwart an invasion from Pluto where the aliens come bearing awesome weapons from the far future. The second tale goes the other way—with ancient sorcery pitted against Cap's super science. Perfunctory plots and cardboard characters mean the only real magic comes from Wally and Joe.

In between these two is a weirdie about interplanetary flowers that grow into giant gorilla-like vampires. It's more curious than compelling. The cover-blurbed "Shark Pirates of Pisces" is filler that makes the Captain Science stories seem profound by comparison… Somehow, mostly from Orlando and Wood, it adds up to a modestly satisfying four-color SF package.

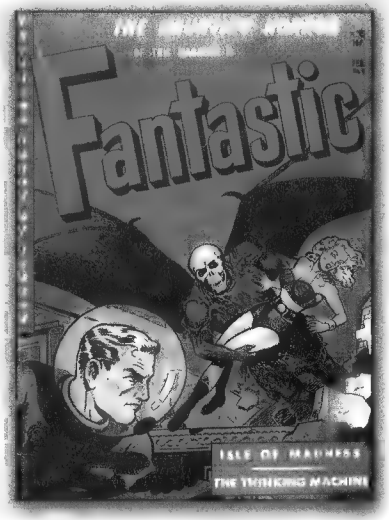
Fantastic #8 (February 1952) has a cover that really blends SF and horror with a skull-headed monster menacing a space-age couple in a graveyard. "Captain Science and the Isle of Madness" leads off inside; penciled by Harrison and looking pretty good as Cap—traveling solo—comes across an island full of dinosaurs and presided over by a mad scientist. This one works as lightweight fun. The second yarn is a very strange robot tale; the creation as illustrated has metal arms, a sewn-together flesh (cloth?) face, and wears a fez! There's not much plot, but the bizarre automaton is a unique character.

Next up is "Brant Craig, Saturn's fast-talking smooth-working private eye." It's enjoyable but predictable with some nice space scenes and heavy zip-a-tone effects. The finale, "Dinosaur in Grandfather's Barn," almost succeeds. A city boy on vacation discovers that life on the farm can be exciting when a dinosaur—frozen for centuries—thaws out and comes back to life. Unfortunately, there's no resolution to the yarn, but at least it offers charming art by old pro H. C. Kiefer. This issue met its goal of a good mix of SF and horror and of continuing-character strips and stand-alone stories.

The *Beware* issues completed the move to horror; #10 featured an adaptation of Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum," and #11 rendered an Ambrose Bierce tale into four-color form.

Chilling Tales #13 (December 1952) was the first issue of the final title and the first to contain art by Matt Fox, who had proved himself a master of the macabre in a series of covers for the legendary pulp magazine *Weird Tales*. Fox contributed the cover and a story, "The Hand of Glory," and both are superb. The zombie on the cover seems chagrined to find that he has been revived by such a ghastly monster. The graveyard has that luminous numinous atmosphere that is Fox's trademark.

Harrison leads things off inside with "The Screaming Skull," a pleasant-enough page-turner about murder and supernatural vengeance when a temple-raider kills his partner after uncovering an evil emerald idol in the South American jungle. Then comes the Fox yarn, about two thieves who come into possession of a magic candle made of human fat and held in a hand cut from a freshly-hung corpse still dangling from a noose. The candle makes people

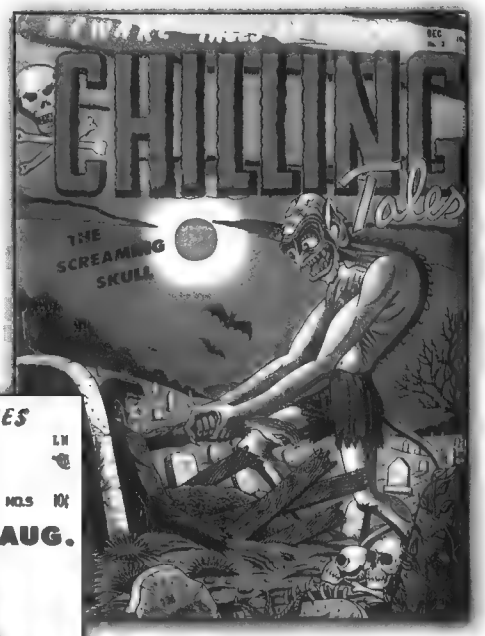


The first issue of the title change (Fantastic #8, Feb 1952) reflected two industry trends… horror was more marketable than SF, and, even more remarkably—fantasy anthologies were more popular than the continuing-character genre

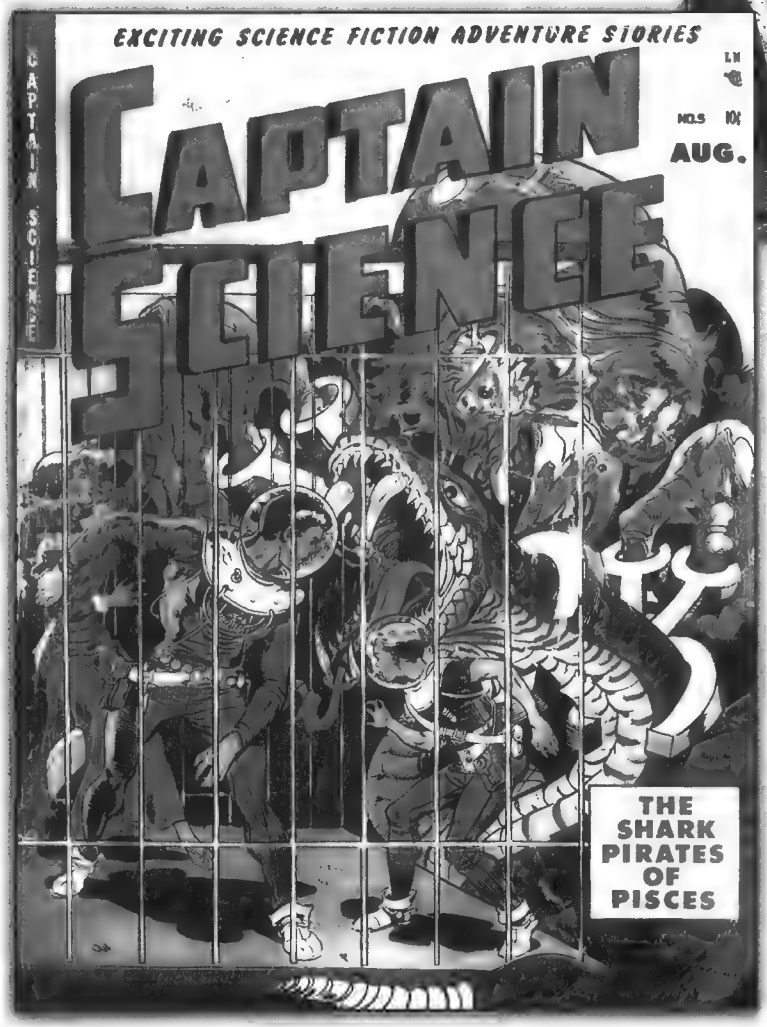
around it fall into a catatonic trance, but what the two thieves don't know is that if blood drips on the candle the spell is broken. And one night one of them cuts himself…

After that comes "Pursued." This time it's two deep-sea treasure hunters, one of whom cuts the other's air hose after pulling up chests full of gems and gold. Of course, the murderer is haunted by a ghost wearing a diving helmet… Vic Carrabotta did an effective job on the art.

"Spider Hider" wraps things up with a spooky story of a man who unwittingly harbors deadly spiders growing from tiny eggs in a ready-to-burst boil on the end of his finger. It's over-the-top horror, a little gross but grimly fascinating, and makes a strong finish for this first of the final and finest five issues of this thrice-transformed title.



The spectacular Matt Fox cover on **Chilling Tales** #13 (Dec 1952) reprised many elements that he used on the cover of a late 1940's **Weird Tales**… the quintessential fantasy mag that he regularly contributed to during the final years of the pulps



Captain Science #5 (Aug 1951) featured the phenomenal art team of Joe Orlando and Wally Wood, whose smooth narrative style gave visual depth and compelling composition to otherwise formulaic pre-Code science fiction fare

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Star Wars	2	NM		$20.00
Star Wars	3	NM		$20.00
Sub-Mariner,The	19	NM		$12.00
Sub-Mariner,The	26	NM	Winnipeg	$10.00
Sub-Mariner,The	27	NM-		$8.00
Sub-Mariner,The	29	NM		$10.00
Sub-Mariner,The	30	NM		$10.00
Sub-Mariner,The	31	NM		$9.00
Sub-Mariner,The	37	NM		$10.00
Sub-Mariner,The	38	NM	Winnipeg	$10.00
Sub-Mariner,The	42	NM	Winnipeg	$6.00
Sub-Mariner,The	47	NM	Winnipeg	$6.00
Sub-Mariner,The	49	NM	Winnipeg	$6.00
Tales of the Fox	1	NM		$10.00
Tales of the Unexpected	45	NM-	Slobodian	$325.00
Tales of the Unexpected	52	NM	Slobodian	$250.00
Tales of the Unexpected	56	NM-	Slobodian	$200.00
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Tales of the Unexpected	74	NM	Slobodian	$100.00
Tales of the Unexpected	76	NM	Slobodian	$100.00
Tales of the Unexpected	78	NM	Slobodian	$100.00
Tales of the Unexpected	80	NM-	Bethlehem	$75.00
Tales of the Unexpected	81	NM-	Bethlehem	$75.00
Tales of the Unexpected	82	NM-	Bethlehem	$75.00
Tales of the Unexpected	83	NM	Bethlehem	$60.00
Tales of the Unexpected	87	NM-	Bethlehem	$60.00
Tales of the Unexpected	90	NM	Bethlehem	$60.00
Tales of the Unexpected	97	NM-	Bethlehem	$60.00
Tales of the Unexpected	99	NM-	Bethlehem	$60.00
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X-Men	31	NM-		$95.00
X-Men	39	NM-		$100.00
X-Men	43	NM		$100.00
X-Men	50	NM-		$125.00
X-Men	55	NM		$125.00
X-Men	65	NM		$125.00
X-Men	94	NM		$500.00
X-Men	103	NM-		$40.00
X-Men	111	NM		$50.00
X-Men	115	NM		$45.00
X-Men	124	NM		$35.00
X-Men	124	NM		$35.00
X-Men	125	NM		$35.00
X-Men	127	NM-		$30.00
X-Men	128	NM-		$30.00
X-Men	130	NM-		$40.00
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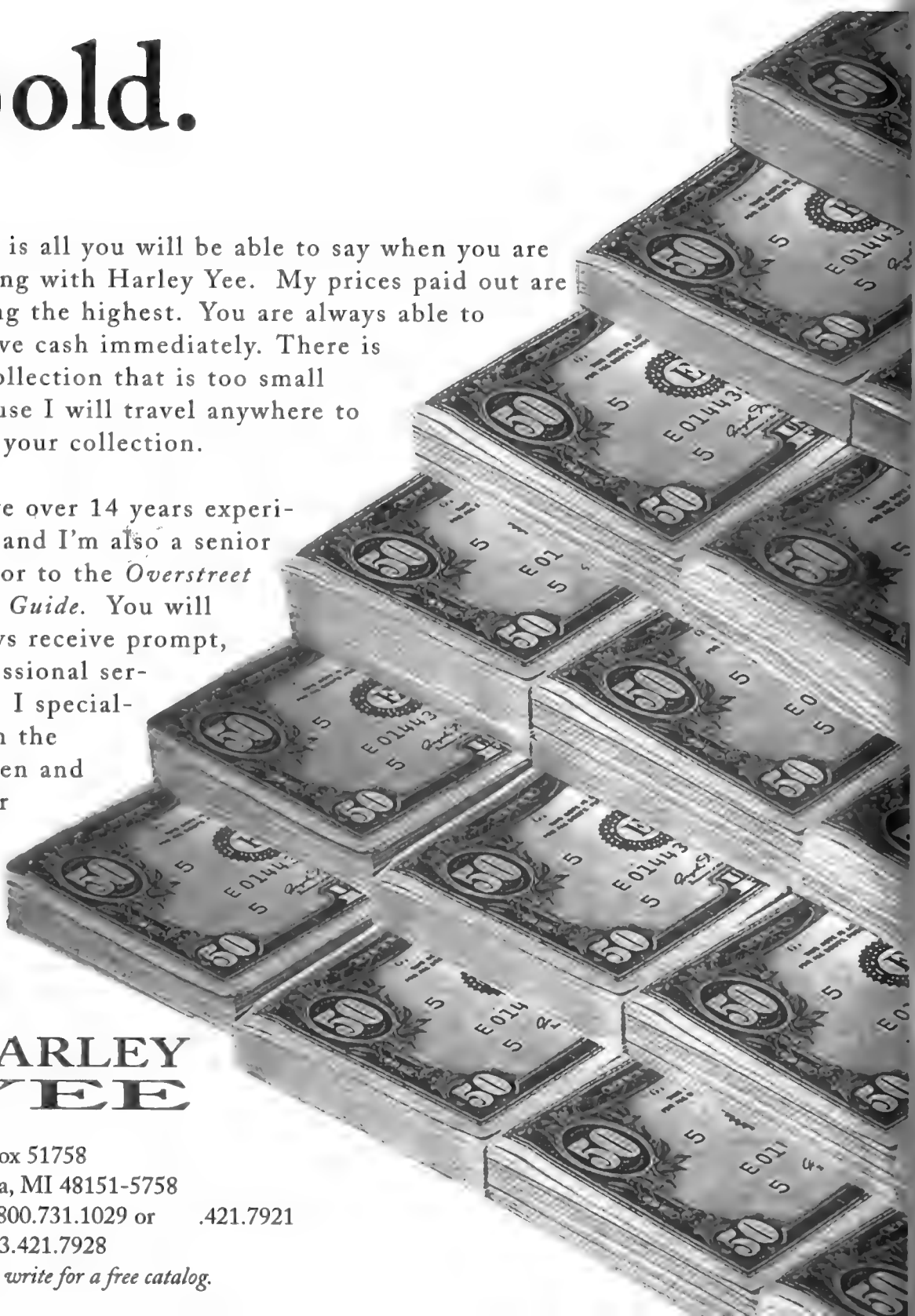

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7 Comic Book Myths

The truth is stranger than the fiction!

By Michelle Nolan

Doesn't it bug you when you see something consistently being misinterpreted in print? That's why I think it's important to set the record straight.

MYTH #1: "Hawkgirl was the first superheroine in comics"

Shiera Sanders imitated her boyfriend Carter Hall's Hawkman identity in *All-Star Comics* #5 (June/July 1941) before becoming Hawkgirl a good six months later. Shiera, however, was not the first costumed heroine, as I have seen stated incorrectly far too many times.

Whether or not you consider the mysterious Black Widow (*Mystic Comics* #4, August 1940) a costumed heroine, several others appeared before Hawkgirl's debut.

They include the non-super-powered Woman in Red in her own strip in *Thrilling Comics* #3 (March 1940); the super-powered USA, The Spirit of Old Glory nicely drawn in her own strip for seven issues beginning with *Feature Comics* #42 (March 1941); the flying Bulletgirl in *Master Comics* #13 (April 1941) in the Bulletman strip, and the ultra-athletic, ultra-exotic *Miss Fury* by Tarpe Mills in newspaper comic strips, beginning in April 1941.

Greg Gilday was an elderly scientist who obtained both youth and super-powers via a machine of his own design during a six-page strip in *War Comics* #2 (May 1940). He did this in order to fight a Martian invasion. His nurse, Joan, appeared in a cameo civilian role in #2 before obtaining super-powers through the same machine in #3 (July 1940) in order to battle the Martians with Greg Gilday.

Interestingly, despite the promises of the comics' editor, there was no reference to the two-part Martian invasion story in *War Comics* #4. In that issue, the Martians are nowhere to be found, with Greg and Joan instead battling a South American dictator before disappearing forever. *War Comics* became *War Stories* with #5 (1942, undated).

Shown here is the cover to the rare *War Comics* #3, which is not pictured in the *Gerber Photo-Journal*, along with a panel of the super-powered versions of Greg Gilday and Joan from her debut story in #3. Incidentally, the *Photo-Journal* incorrectly lists *War* #2 and 3 as 1941 issues—I have *War* #2 through 5, so I am sure that my dates are correct! I don't know the date of #1—it may be an undated 1940 issue—but the *Guide* incorrectly lists it as May 1940, which is the correct date of #2.

MYTH #2: "There were more comic books than pulp magazines in the pre-Comics Code era, 1933-54, encompassing the Golden Age and the Atom Age"

Rather, it should be stated that there are more truly collectible Golden Age comic book titles than pulp titles, thereby enhancing the value and desirability of the long-ignored pulps.

There's no question that some of the pulps have long been undervalued, especially titles such as *The Shadow* and other exotic pulps. But it's simply not true that, up to the time most of the pulps gradually disappeared in the 1949-54 period, there had been more comic books published than pulps.

The well-known pulp historian John Locke produced a pulp title checklist in the fanzine *Pulp Vault* #12/13 (a double issue) from Tattered Pages Press in 1996. There are, of course, errors in the list; my own collection of more than 1,000 pulps is enough to confirm this.

However, this has been the best attempt to date at a comprehensive listing of pulp titles. Locke listed some 1,043 titles and estimated that slightly more than 34,000 pulps were published (with only a handful coming after 1954).

How many comic books were there during this same period?

The answer is that there were some 26,619 newsstand comics published from 1933-54, give or take about four dozen issues that Southern California indexer Dan Stevenson and I are not sure exist. Stevenson has painstakingly noted the dates of more than 82,000 newsstand comics published through 1989, in large part because he owns more than 70,000 of them!

The vast majority of the pulps were published

The rare War Comics #3 (Jul 1940, Dell) featured the first superheroine in comic books and is not pictured in the Photo-Journal

in the 1920s, '30s and '40s. Despite how nifty they are, there never has been as intense a nostalgia factor for pulps as for comics, in part because the pulps disappeared in the 1950s and in part because most people did not start reading them until they were at least of high school age.

Real nostalgia is fueled by what captures your imagination between the ages of about 8 to 12 years old. "The Golden Age of Anything is when you were 12" is not an idle statement. If you are, say, 40 or 50 years old, I'll bet you're a lot more nostalgic for what you loved to read at 12 than what you loved to read at 20.

On the other hand, if you're talking about hero pulps, there certainly were many, many more heroic comic books than pulps. The *Hero Pulp Index* from 1971 by Robert Weinberg and Lohr McKinstry lists 1,907 hero pulps, and they nailed nearly all of them. There were, of course, many more than 2,000 hero comics produced during the pulp era.

GREG AND JOAN CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY.
---BUT WE STILL HAVEN'T SEEN ANY REAL MARTIANS THEN, GREG.
NOT YET, JOAN. BUT SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT IT WON'T BE LONG!
FLETCHER
LITTLE DO GREG AND JOAN REALIZE THAT THE FEAR-CRAZED MOB OF CITIZENS HAVE BEEN LOOTING AND BURNING THE REMAINING BUILDINGS IN THEIR MAD FRENZY.

Greg Gilday and his costumed aide Joan (formerly his nurse) fly to battle against Martian invaders in the lower right panel of page 6 from War Comics #3

MYTH #3: "Marvel did not belong to the earliest attempt at a Comics Code"

When the Association of Comics Magazine Publishers formed a Comics Code in the late 1940s, albeit a remarkably loose code to which most major publishers did not belong, Marvel did join, although later than some other publishers. Marvel ran the "Authorized ACMP" star on most of its covers from the middle of 1951 through 1954.

For example, *Marvel Tales* #107 (June 1951) through #130 (January 1955) all ran the first Comics Code symbol. That's right—did you know that a handful of 1955 comics indeed carried the symbols of two different Comics Codes?

Lev Gleason's *Boy Loves Girl* (later *Boy Meets Girl*) ran the early Code symbol from #1 (February 1950) through #49 (December 1954).

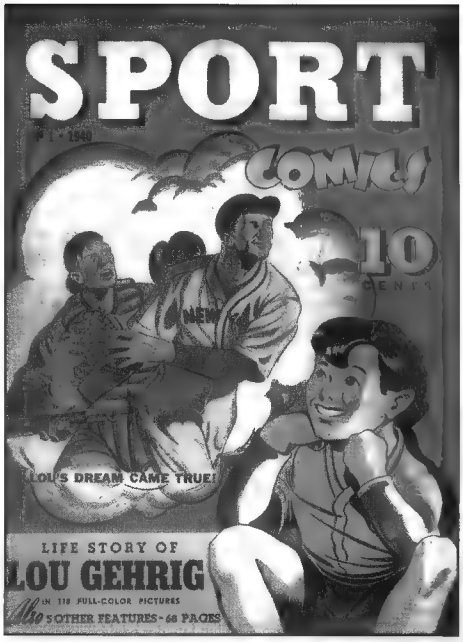
I can remember getting back issues of comics when I began to collect in the 1950s and being puzzled by this early version of the Comics Code Authority.

MYTH #4: "EC was an important comic book company in the pre-Code period"

There's no question that, in retrospect, EC is vitally important in comic history and to collectors. However, EC produced exactly 263 comic books from 1950-54. It stopped publishing comics late in 1955, with its last titles perhaps lingering on the newsstands into the first couple of months in 1956. That means EC produced slightly more than 2% of the 12,665 newsstand comics (again, give or take a few) published in the first five years of the 1950s!

Granted, the furor over horror comics put EC in the spotlight, along with Dr. Fredric Wertham's objections to the company's products in *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954). But how important—at the time—do you really think EC was in the vast scheme of things, considering that the company published so few comics?

MYTH #5: "Marvel Comics "shutdown" of 1957 and there were ensuing publishing limitations imposed for the next decade. Also, Marvel was not a major publisher in the 1950s"



Contrary to fandom misconception, Sport Comics #1 (1940) is the first true sports comic in history

To be sure, publisher Martin Goodman's huge comic book line endured an implosion in 1957 when he attempted to link up with the ill-fated American News Company rather than continue to circulate comics with his own Atlas Distribution Company.

Marvel published more than five dozen comics with the Atlas logo dated either August or September 1957. The infamous *Dippy Duck* one-shot (of which I am a proud owner) was the last Atlas logo comic and the only one dated October, 1957. However, when Goodman's printing capacity was limited to eight titles a month in a linkup with rival DC, he published eight titles dated November 1957 and eight more dated December 1957, as Will Murray pointed out in his marvelous Marvel pre-hero article in *CBM* #72.

Contrary to popular belief, however, Goodman published exactly 96 comics only in 1958 and 1959. Marvel's numbers slowly but steadily went up every year after that, as Stevenson's issue-by-issue documentation shows—from 103 in 1960 and 122 in 1961 all the way to 190 in 1967 and 218 in 1968 (followed by 249 in 1969 after Goodman's liberation from any limitations).

I can't tell you how many times I have read something like "Stan Lee was limited to eight titles per month when he began to publish his superhero line in 1961-63 period." Lee was indeed limited, but he found ways to consistently expand his line. In fact, Marvel published more comic books than Archie Publications did every year beginning in 1961.

Marvel, by the way, was far from the "backwater" publisher throughout most of the 1950s that some comic book historians would have you believe. In fact, from 1950, the year of Marvel's first significant implosion, through 1957, the year of its second implosion, Marvel published 2,819 comics (thank you, Dan Stevenson!). In contrast, DC published less... 2,602 and Dell (Western) produced 2,600.

My guess is that DC and Dell sold more total comics, but nobody can say Marvel was not a major publisher.

MYTH #6: "Dozens of publishers shut down in the wake of the establishment of the Comics Code Authority, whose stamp-shaped seal first appeared on early 1955 comics"

This may be the biggest misconception of all comic historians and collectors! It drives me crazy when I read about how the comic field was "decimated" by the Comics Code and other such unsupported and nonsensical contentions.

Several significant comic book publishers, such as Fawcett, Fiction House, and Hillman, shut down in the 1953-54 period, but their decision to discontinue publishing comics had nothing to do with the Comics Code or even the effects of horror and crime comics.

There never have been very many major comic book publishing companies, just as there never were many major pulp magazine publishing companies.

In 1954, that supposedly tumultuous, tortuous, and truly terrible year for comic book publishers, a whopping 2,714 newsstand comic books were produced, the third most in the first 50-plus years of comic book history! (Following 3,161 in 1952 and 2,880 in 1953).

However, only seven publishers printed more than 100 comic books in 1954 (not titles but individual issues). Four more publishers produced at least 68 issues (*Archie* was number 11 with 68). None of the 11 went out of business until the end of 1956 at the earliest.

Ten companies produced fewer than ten comic books dated 1954 and can be ignored as non-factors in the comic world. So you had the 11 companies that produced at least 68 comics in 1954, followed by 19 generally much smaller publishers with runs ranging from 66 issues (No. 12, Toby Press) to ten issues (the last gasp of Fiction House).

Of those 19 small publishers, Toby, Gleason, EC, Star, Comic Media, United Feature, Trojan, Eastern, Orbit, Mainline, and Fiction House bit the dust in either 1954 or 1955, followed by a few more in the next year or two. This was hardly the total carnage portrayed by some misguided comic book historians, and hardly the significant loss some would have you believe (except, of course, in the case of EC).

Boy Meets Girl #1 (Feb 1950, Lev Gleason) featured the early Association of Comics Magazine Publishers approved symbol on the left-hand side. This code symbol, unlike the symbol of the more widely-known Comics Code Authority, popped up just about anywhere on the covers of several different publishers...

Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from the '40s through the '60s. In real life, Michelle works as a freelance journalist.

Granted, sales probably went down on many titles during the supposed chaos of the mid-1950s. Yet, there were 2,351 comics published in 1955 and 2,054 in 1956, the first two years of the Comics Code Authority. In contrast, despite the popularity of Silver Age superheroes, there were never more than 1,590 comics published in any year throughout the 1960s!

Clearly, it wasn't the Comics Code that destroyed comics, even though the Code obviously did a number on horror and crime comics. Credit television, distribution and outlet problems, and changing times for the marked decline in total issues during the 1960s.

For that matter, I have long believed that the major publishers of the 1954 period were delighted to see the Comics Code come in, simply to help get rid of some of the newsstand clutter caused by the second-tier companies. Companies like DC, Charlton, Harvey, Dell, and Archie were surely not hurt a bit by the Comics Code.

MYTH #7: "The first sports comic was *Champion Comics* #2 (Dec. 1939)"

This title, later published by Harvey but first published by Worth, debuted with a 12-page cover-featured story of an athlete, The Champ, but the rest of the issue consisted of the Liberty Lads, Neptina, Jungleman, Bill Handy, Blazing Scarab, and four short humor strips.

I would imagine that some earlier 1930's comic books carried strips about athletes. But the first real sports comic was, fittingly enough, the undated *Sport Comics* #1 from Street & Smith in 1940. It ran four issues before changing its title to *True Sport Picture Stories*.

And there you have it. Would any collectors out there like to share other myths? Contact *CBM* and let's bust more comic book myths wide open! 'Til next time....

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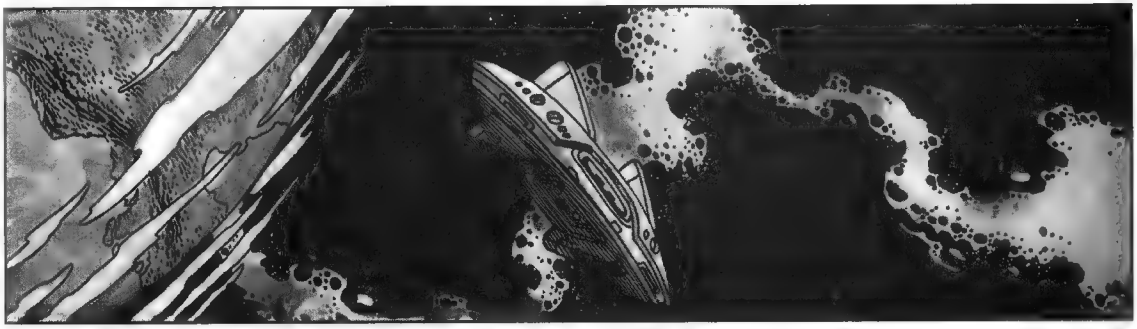
ABOVE: Kane's wonderful pen and ink self-portrait. FACING PAGE: Kane flying saucer panel from "Starcrown" in Heavy Metal V2#10 (Feb 1979)

The Mark of the Master

By John Fallon

Gil Kane!



What's in a name? When a name is mentioned, a certain amount of recognition occurs… or doesn't. If I say the name "Eli Katz," for example, I'll get a blank stare from most comic book people. If I mention the names "Gil Stack," or "Pen Star" or "Scott Edward," I will probably get the same response. But if I mention the name Gil Kane, everyone will say "Ah, yes… he's one of the great ones!… I know his stuff well!" and they will immediately visualize Kane's graceful depictions of the classic Silver Age Green Lantern and The Atom.

Needless to say, all five names mentioned—Katz, Stack, Edward and Kane—belong to the same artist, working most commonly under the pen name "Gil Kane." It's an interesting introduction to Gil, a fellow who is, in my humble opinion, the most underrated and under-recognized comic book artist of any era.

The present appreciation for Gil lies primarily in fame associated with his work on the Silver Age Green Lantern and Atom, but my purpose for writing here goes beyond that and includes many examples of Gil's other work. The artistic output that I am referring to falls into one of two basic categories. First, the early years that established Gil and eventually resulted in the creation of his most famous Silver Age superheroes. And, second, the years of Gil's post-Atom/Lantern artistic output.

From Latvia to DC!

To gain an understanding of what has contributed to Gil becoming the artist he is today, it's important to begin with some information about his earliest background. Gil was born on April 6, 1926 in Latvia, where he was known as "Eli Katz." Emigrating to New York with his family when he was three, Gil had a classic Depression-era childhood, which included the avid reading of early pulps. Eventually he attended high school at The School of Industrial Art (later known as The School of Art and Design). At the age of 15, Gil made his first attempt to enter comicdom, visiting the offices of DC while on summer vacation. That first visit, however, was not a lucky one and he was turned away. But things would soon change, and the Gil Kane legend would finally begin…

The 1940s - The Early Years

Gil's start in the comics business was not as glorious as one might have hoped. He began his career with the mundane tasks of erasing borders, doing balloons, backgrounds and finishing touches for companies such as Street & Smith, the Binder shop and the like. Slowly but surely, Gil evolved into an inker and penciler, and during the early 1940s, Gil eventually worked on many characters of the Golden Age.

Gil's first big break came when he was employed by MLJ in 1942. At that time (under the name Pen Star) Gil worked on characters such as Inspector Bentley of Scotland Yard, the Shield, Black Hood, and Captain Commando for *Pep Comics*. The Scarlet Avenger was another character Kane drew, appearing in *Zip Comics*, and he did nice inking for at least a couple of tales of the Black Hood, who appeared in *Black Hood Comics*. Indeed, at the age of 18, Gil created an entire story for the Shield in *Pep Comics* #47 (March 1944), entitled "The Madman's Castle." *(continued on page 24)*

Mark of the Master

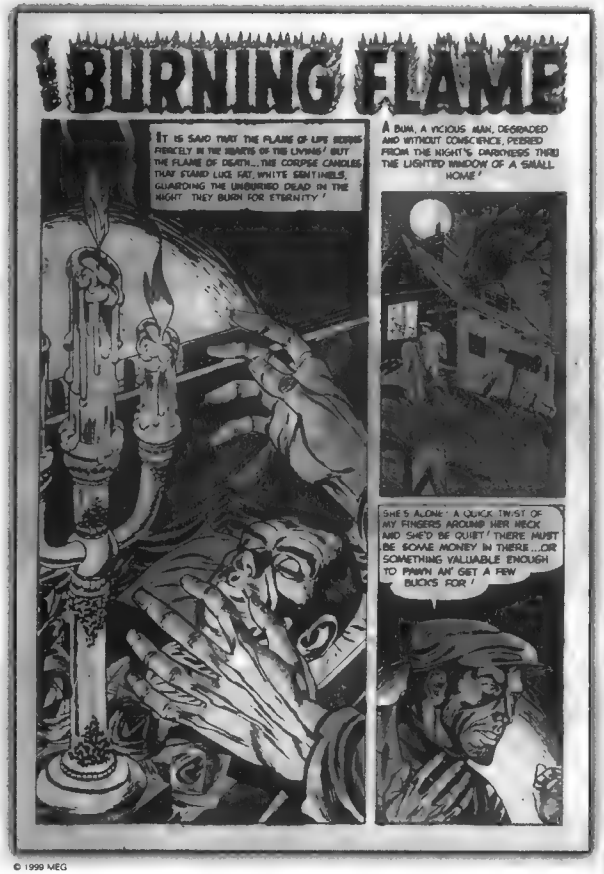
GIL KANE'S

Pre-Code Atlas Fantasy

"The Burning Flame" from **Mystic** #8 (May 1952) 4 pages, pencils and inks by Gil Kane

"The Stranger From Space" from **Mystic** #24 (Oct 1953) 4 pages, pencils by Gil Kane, inks by Matt Fox

"A Little Pain Never Hurt Anybody" from **Marvel Tales** #117 (Aug 1953), 5 pages, pencils by Gil Kane, inker unknown


BURNING FLAME
IT IS SAID THAT THE FLAME OF LIFE BURNS FIERCELY IN THE HEARTS OF THE LIVING! BUT THE FLAME OF DEATH... THE CORPSE CANDLES THAT STAND LIKE RAT, WHITE SENTINELS, GUARDING THE UNBURNED DEAD IN THE NIGHT THEY BURN FOR ETERNITY!
A BUM, A VICIOUS MAN, DEGRADED AND WITHOUT CONSCIENCE, PEERED FROM THE NIGHT'S DARKNESS THRU THE LIGHTED WINDOW OF A SMALL HOME!
SHE'S ALONE! A QUICK TWIST OF MY FINGERS AROUND HER NECK AND SHE'D BE QUIET! THERE MUST BE SOME MONEY IN THERE...OR SOMETHING VALUABLE ENOUGH TO PAWN AN' GET A FEW BUCKS FOR!

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THE STRANGER FROM SPACE
DOCTOR MERLE! THAT THING ISN'T A COMET! IT'S A SPACE SHIP FROM ANOTHER WORLD!
"L-LOOK, IT'S GONE AND IT'S GOING TO COME DOWN NEAR OUR LABORATORY!"
THE CRAFT BOUNCED ONCE, TWICE, THEN RUMBLED TO A HALT IN FRONT OF DOCTOR MERLE'S RESEARCH LABORATORY...
WE'VE GOT TO SAVE WHOEVER IS INSIDE THAT SHIP! COME ON, LUDWIG! WE'LL BE THE FIRST TO SEE A CREATURE FROM ANOTHER PLANET!
AND I SHOULD CALL THE POLICE! IT MAY KILL US!
DON'T BE AN IDIOT, LUDWIG! DO WE WHAT THIS MEANS TO THE WORLD OF SCIENCE?
WAIT THEODORE OF THE SHIP IT'S OPENING!
ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST MYSTIC TALES

A LITTLE PAIN NEVER HURT ANYBODY
A TALE TO MARVEL AT
WHY NOT? A LITTLE PAIN NEVER HURT ANYBODY
AAAAAAA!
HURRY, DOC, DON'T TELL HIM YOU'RE GONNA PULL MY TOOTH WITHOUT FIRST GIVING HIM A NEEDLE OR SOMETHING
THERE'S MY RICH DAD-IN IN THE WHITE LABCOAT SHOPS A SIGN TELLING ME I SHOULD SEE AN ANESTHETIC ON MY PATIENTS BEFORE AN EXTRACTION
I'M GOING TO FAINT!
LEAVE HIM ALONE OR COULD HE EXPECT ME TO USE ANESTHESIA AS A MEANS OF...LET 'IM SUFFER! SERVES HIM RIGHT!

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TOO LATE TO SAVE HIM, YES! BUT I CAN STILL AVENGE HIM!
POOR FELLOW! SORROW HAS ADDLED HIM. WHAT CAN HE DO?
ULPAIR LOST NO TIME IN PREPARING HIMSELF FOR HIS GRIM QUEST...
GO NOT MY SON, MUST I LOSE YOU, AS WELL AS YOUR BROTHER? ONE WITH YOUR AFFLICTION CAN BE NO WARRIOR OR DRAGON SLAYER!
MAYHAP I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN! I'M IN THE HANDS OF THE
ULPAIR WAS THE VENGEANCE WITH-OUT SO MUCH AS A BLINK...
AT LAST YOU'VE MET SOMEONE YOU CANNOT KILL WITH YOUR EYES!
NOW OLD SERPENT...BEHOLD YOUR OWN REFLECTION!
RIDE AWAY, OLD FELLOW THAT IS THE LAST FOUL YOU'LL MAKE

GIL KANE'S

Post-Code DC Fantasy

"Beware The Weirdos" from from **Tales of the Unexpected** #88 (Apr/May 1965) 9 pages, pencils and inks by Gil Kane

"The Eyes of The Basilisk" from **House of Mystery** #184 (above, Jan/Feb 1970) 10 pages, pencils by Gil Kane, inks by Wallace Wood

"Sword of the Dead" from **Adventure** #425 (at left, Dec/Jan 1972-73) 6 pages, pencils and inks by Gil Kane

Mark of the Master

MLJ wasn't Gil's final stop, though. During the early 1940s, Gil was a ubiquitous Golden Age artist, moving from company to company in an effort to hone his craft and make a more significant reputation. Besides his work at MLJ, Gil also worked on Iron Ace, Black Angel, and Flying Dutchman in *Air Fighter's Comics* at Hillman; Lightning at *Ace*; Golden Eagle in *Contact Comics* at Aviation Press; Blue Beetle and Commandos of the Devil Dogs at Holyoke/Continental; and Atomic Man, Buck Saunders, Junior Rangers, and Green Lama at Feature/Crestwood.

Gil was tireless, also doing work for Timely and DC… and the famed team of Joe Simon and Jack Kirby. While working for Simon and Kirby at DC (prior to their entry into the service for World War II), Gil worked on several of S&K's most well-known titles. Simon and Kirby were responsible for putting together the covers and doing the splash pages for their characters, and much of the rest was left to Kane. During his six-month tenure with S&K, Gil worked on Sandman, Newsboy Legion, and Boy Commandos. Instructed to "ape" Kirby's style, Gil worked hard during this period! A good example of his work under Simon and Kirby can be found in *Adventure Comics* #92, "The Tough Guy," dated June/July 1944.

Gil's work for Timely, DC's biggest publishing competitor, can be found on Timely characters such as The Vision, Red Hawk, and The Young Allies. An excellent example of that work includes his inking on a *Young Allies* story entitled "The Spawn of Death" in *Young Allies* #11 (Spring 1944).

WHAT ARE THE CHANCES FOR LOVE, ROMANCE AND MARRIAGE FOR THE POOR...
WORKING GIRL
I'D LOVE TO GO ON THE OUTING AS YOUR DATE, HAROLD...BUT I JUST CAN'T...AND YOU KNOW WHY!
BUT JENNY! THIS IS SUNDAY...A DAY OF REST! FORGET THE WORK AND COME WITH US AND HAVE SOME FUN!
QUIT BEGGING, HAROLD! SHE'S GOT TO STAY! CAN'T YOU SEE SHE'S A WORKING GIRL!

Kane's splash page from Lovers #58 (Feb 1954, Atlas) ©MEG

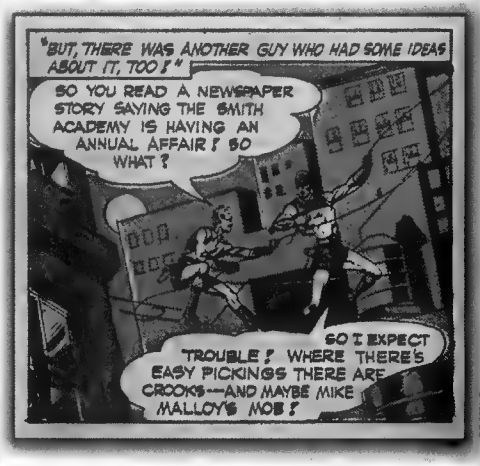
Superheroes and war stories are not the only genre that Gil worked on during the '40s, and crime, westerns, and many filler stories felt the effect of Gil's hand. Doing art for *Crime Does Not Pay* at Gleason, *Crime & Punishment* stories at Fox, and *Monte Hale Western* for Fawcett, Gil created quite a bit of such "genre work."

While he worked for *Famous Funnies* in the late 1940s, Gil also did depictions of true stories as shown in "The Hero That Used His Head" in *Heroic Comics* #49 (July 1948) and "Follow the Leader… Cub Scout," found in *Heroic Comics* #53 (March 1949).

Besides his comic book work during the 1940s, Gil also found work with newspaper strips, though never under his own name. Gil "ghosted" several strips, ranging from his work on Bernard Bailey's *Vic Jordan*, to Jack Sparling's *Claire Voyant* and Al Plastino's *Hap Hopper*. Gil's work ghosting syndicated strips foreshadowed his work more than three decades later. (Gil would eventually return to the newspaper strips, but using his own name!)

As for Golden Age comic book art, Gil's last such work was with DC in 1947-1948, at the ripe old age of 21! And it was an assignment that he could sink his teeth into… The Wildcat strip in *Sensation Comics* (which he did using the pseudonym "Gil Stack"). Gil drew Wildcat for five months (October 1947 to February 1948) creating classic stories that include "The Ghost Galleon," "The Count That Never Ended," and "Murder Masquerade." He breathed life back into Wildcat, a character many felt was mundane until Kane came along.

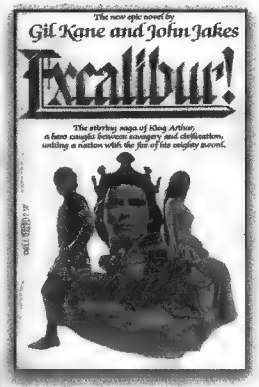
The 1940s were a decade of learning and skill development for Gil Kane, a set of wide experiences which helped propel a very young man into adulthood and to eventual stature as one of the most respected artists in the world of comic books.


"BUT, THERE WAS ANOTHER GUY WHO HAD SOME IDEAS ABOUT IT, TOO!"
SO YOU READ A NEWSPAPER STORY SAYING THE SMITH ACADEMY IS HAVING AN ANNUAL AFFAIR! SO WHAT?
SO I EXPECT TROUBLE! WHERE THERE'S EASY PICKINGS THERE ARE CROOKS--AND MAYBE MIKE MALLOY'S MOB!

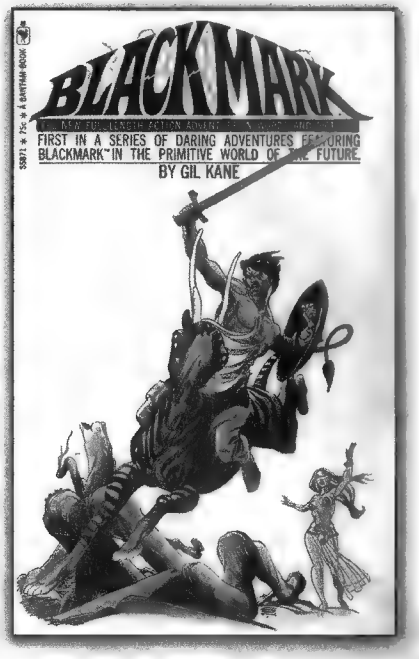
An early example of Kane at DC… Sandman and Sandy from Adventure Comics #92 (Jun/Jul 1944, panel from page 7, "The Tough Guy")

AT THE HOME BASE, THE OFFICERS AND MEN WAIT TENSELY... EYES SCANNING THE GRAY SKY... EARS STRAINED FOR THE HUM OF MOTORS OF THE RETURNING...
BLIND FLIGHT!
WHATCHA THINK, HARRY?
DUNNO WHAT TO THINK! THEY'VE BEEN GONE A LONG TIME...
THOSE MIGS AIN'T SITTIN' DUCKS TO TAKE POT SHOTS AT YA KNOW! THEY GOTTA BE LUCKY TO COME BACK FROM MEETIN' 'EM...AND MAYBE TONY AN' THE REST JUST AIN'T LUCKY NO MORE!
SHUT YER TRAP, WILL YA? I THINK I HEAR SOMETHING!

© 1999 MEG


The new epic novel by
Gil Kane and John Jakes
Excalibur!
The stirring saga of King Arthur, a hero caught between savagery and civilization, uniting a nation with the fire of his mighty sword.

LEFT: "Blind Flight" panel from page 1, War Comics #19 (May 1953, Atlas)



Kane's reknowned paperback covers for Excalibur (Mar 1980, Dell) and Blackmark (1971, Bantam)

King of Genres

The decade of the 1950s saw the decline of the superhero, and artists like Gil Kane scrambled to get work and maintain a living. So many comic book pros (including Gil) took whatever assignments came their way. At the close of the 1940s, westerns became the vehicle that all companies produced to maintain profits. Horror, war, science fiction, and the new romance market (promulgated by Gil's old mentors, Simon and Kirby) seemed to be the new commodity that would endure through the 1950s.

With his work on Fawcett's *Monte Hale Western* in 1948-1949, Gil entered the "genre" market. During the beginning of the 1950s, Gil's work at Avon and Ziff-Davis... mainly focusing on western and romance titles. His work at Atlas included romance, horror, and war, including "Working Girl," in *Lovers* #58 (February 1954), "The Burning Flame" in *Mystic* #8 (May 1952), and "Blind Flight" which appeared in the May 1953 of *War Comics*.

Returning to DC in 1950, Gil's initial work there involved westerns, science fiction, and romance titles. Gil always said he had a "feel" for science fiction and westerns. With no major character assignment of his own, Gil was forced to do filler stories or minor characters that often did not survive more than a few issues. It was during this period that Gil developed that wonderful style that made him one of the most recognizable artists of the era. Analyzing Gil's work from this period, one can see the similarities of this work to his later Green Lantern art and its contrast to his earlier Wildcat period. But even during the late 1940s, one could spot the distinctive Kane nose, mouth, hair spit curl, and other general facial features unique to Gil's style. These elements can be seen in Astra—The Girl from the Future from the September/October, 1951 *Sensation Comics* story in a story entitled "SOS From Space." They can also be seen in some of the *All Star Comics* fillers such as "The Girl From Aquaterra" (*All Star* #56, December/ January 1950-51), which also showcases these signature stylistic traits. These examples really exemplify Kane's early individuality, and contain stories and set the stage for his work during the later 1950s. Other than some occasional work for Dell in 1957 and 1958, the majority of Gil's output during the latter half of the 1950s was for DC.

When Gil started doing westerns for DC in the beginning of the 1950s, most of his work was found on Overland Coach in *All American Western*, Don Caballero in *All Star Western*, or Kit Colby, Girl Sheriff and Jimmy Wakely in *jimmy Wakely*. By the time *jimmy Wakely* and *All American Western* were discontinued in 1952, Gil had already begun work on a feature that would endure through most of the 1950s. Trigger Twins (in *All Star Western)* was the stepping stone which ultimately led to Gil getting a continuing western feature at DC. Throughout the 1950s, Gil also worked on characters such as Foley of the Fighting Fifth in *All Star Western* and two *Western Comics* features, Nighthawk and Matt Savage. Of all the most well-known Kane western features of the 1950s, *(continued on page 50)*

Note Kane's superb arrangement of figures in this panel from Dell's "Brain Boy" (FC #1330 (Apr/Jun 1962)

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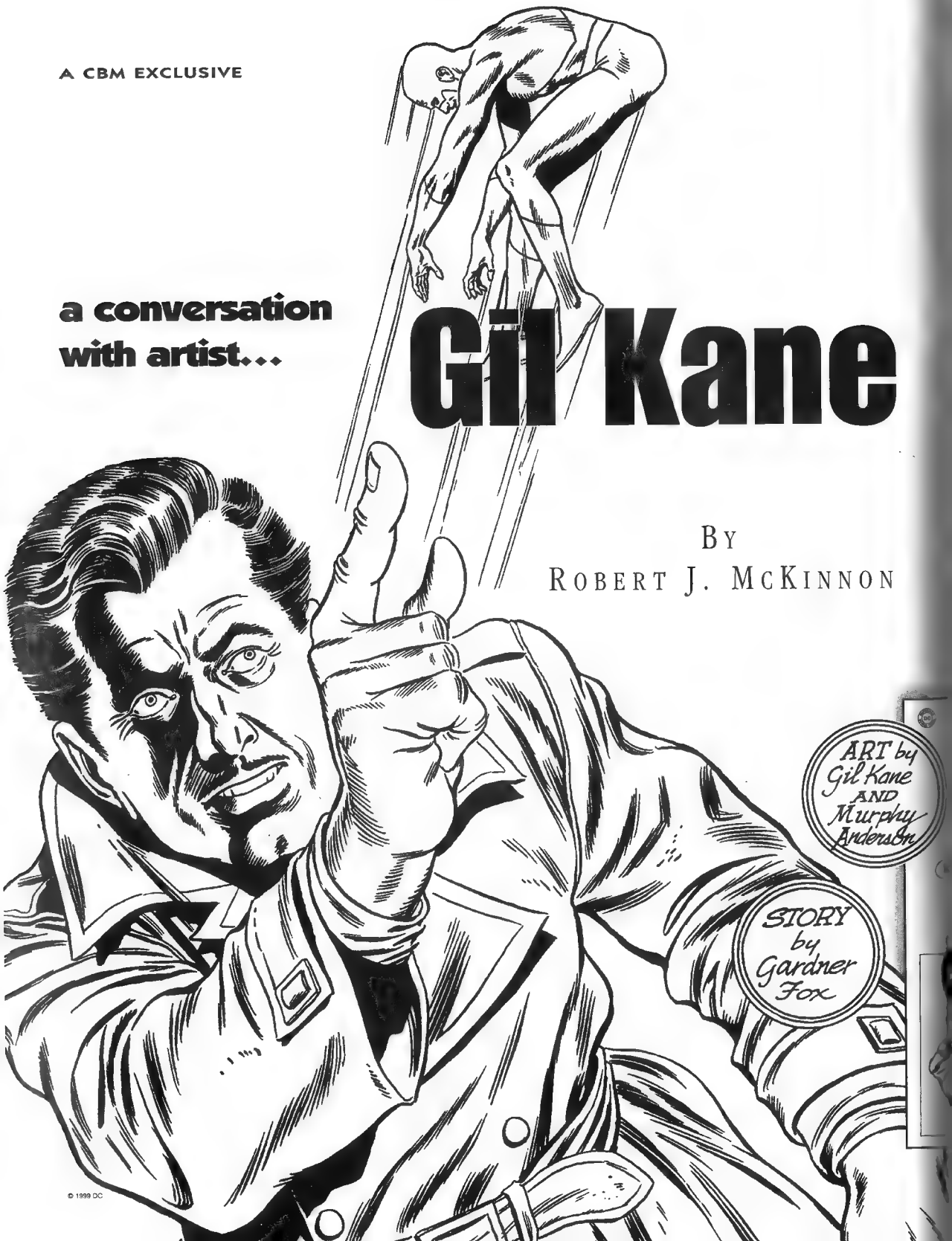
A CBM EXCLUSIVE

a conversation with artist...

Gil Kane

By
Robert J. McKinnon



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When one hears the name Gil Kane, what comes to mind are visions of boldly rendered figures soaring through the air, surrounded by crackling energy. Kane, who has been a comic book artist for over sixty years, has done work that is nearly always recognizable as his own, reflecting the efforts of an artist in pursuit of superior picture making that is powerful, graceful, and dynamic.

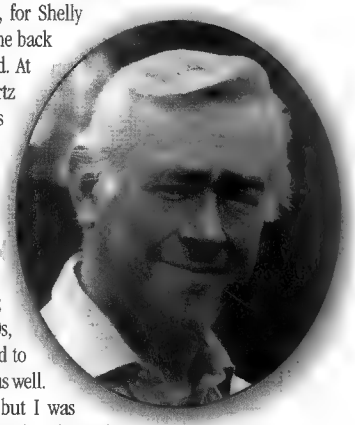
Kane was born in Latvia seven decades ago, arrived in New York as a young child with his family in 1930, and towards the end of high school he went directly into comics, taking all of the work he could find at more than a dozen comic book publishing houses.

During World War II, Kane was in the Service, stationed primarily in the Pacific. When Kane returned to the States, he worked on salary at MLJ and Timely, then pursued freelance efforts for several years. Finally, in 1949, he began a long, steady relationship with DC Comics and, eventually, Marvel Comics.

Those are the plain facts, but there is *nothing* plain about Gil Kane or his art. The following interview was culled from several conversations over the past two years, where Kane consistently demonstrated that he is highly articulate, witty, candid, and self-effacing. As an ardent admirer of his work, it was a tremendous privilege interviewing Kane. The depth and scope of his knowledge is often *astounding*.

Robert McKinnon: *Who first hired you at DC?*

Gil Kane: I worked for DC a couple of times before I finally went to work there permanently. I worked at DC briefly in 1943 and again for six months in 1947, for Shelly Mayer, and they let me go. And then I came back a year and a half later, in '49, and stayed. At that point, Shelly had left and Julie Schwartz and Bob Kanigher had taken over Mayer's books. Julie was the one who hired me.

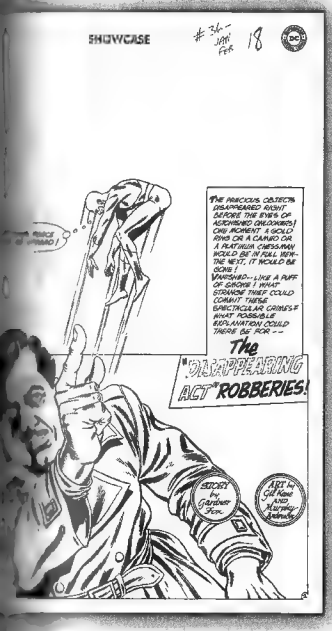


McKinnon: *And then you worked at DC, more or less continuously, for the next 50 years…*

Kane: Right… although there were times when DC didn't supply enough work; there was a period, around the late '50s, where a lot of the books collapsed and had to be dropped, so I did work for other houses as well. Everybody was affected to some degree, but I was doing *Rex, Hopalong Cassidy,* and Johnny Thunder's title, and *all* of those books were dropped, so I was more drastically affected. I was doing a lot of the westerns, and I took over the *Hopalong Cassidy* book from Gene Colan, who couldn't really draw westerns.

What Gene used to do was rent 16MM versions of the movies and trace off the screen images. Isn't that incredible? Finally, Gene's approach became impossible; he couldn't find enough different attitudes for the scripts. So, he gave it up. Colan eventually found his niche with Dracula and Daredevil… I felt the

A rare glimpse at the original art of the entire 13-page backup story from Showcase #36 (Jan/Feb 1962, below and follow-on pages)



Conversation with Gil Kane

Many DC collectors have suggested that work done by Kane, Anderson, Kubert, Infantino, and Heath represent the quintessential look of the Silver Age... and helps to explain the recent explosion in demand for original pages by these five artists. Of special interest are works which combine the talents of any two of these greats... such as the impeccable Kane/Anderson story below

horror stuff suited Gene much more than action stuff, where you have to draw freely.

When Gene started to work with Stan Lee (Iron Man and the like) he was able to use a much simpler style of picture making, and that freed Gene up. But with westerns, you just had to be able to draw it; not only the figures, but be able to create a context for the figures, with design and composition. Gene seemed to have trouble with that at the time.

McKinnon: *Did* you *ever use photographs as reference?*

Kane: Of course. Actually, the whole business has changed and now guys are using models continuously. I just don't know how they're able to do it and still get a book out in a reasonable length of time, so I get the feeling that that there must be some computer use. I'm computer illiterate, so I don't know exactly how they use it. I would guess that 50% of the guys are using models, totally or in part, for critical gestures and attitudes. That's the way illustrators for magazines worked years ago, but it was never that way for comics because most of the guys in comics came out of *Little Orphan Annie* or *Popeye*. What the new guys are losing when they work the way they do is the spontaneity that is the hallmark of cartooning.

We were cartoonists, and expression was everything. Even though an artist like Norman Rockwell utilized a type of photo-realism, he would expressively enhance the models or photos he was using, and that's what gave his style its virtue. The photo-realism was secondary. What made his work compelling was the human expressiveness he captured; he put *cartoon qualities* into those illustrations.

McKinnon: *I know that the art you did was a job and you were always on a deadline, but did you enjoy Rex and Hopalong Cassidy and that type of work?*

Kane: I enjoyed the drawing and I *especially* enjoyed doing westerns. When they finally let me ink *Hopalong Cassidy* my world was almost complete! Having that assignment was like being in paradise.

McKinnon: *You continued at DC, and eventually superheroes were revived. Did you ink your own work on Green Lantern and The Atom?*

Kane: I was not allowed to ink Green Lantern. They only let me ink the stuff that wasn't making a lot of money. Sales on books like *Hopalong Cassidy* and and the title with Johnny Thunder eventually waned, so they let me ink those for a while. Julie Schwartz just didn't like my inking.

McKinnon: *I've heard that Schwartz didn't like Infantino's inking either. Whose inking did Schwartz prefer?*

Kane: He preferred slick inking by guys like Joe Giella, Bernie Sachs, and Frank Giacoia. I wasn't as crazy about Joe's inking as Julie was... I thought there was a certain loss of the pencils. Giella worked better with some guys than others. I think he worked better with Carmine than with me. My pencil-

SHOWCASE
#54 JAN. 1960
21
EVERYONE IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF THE CAMEO WAS THOROUGHLY SEARCHED -- BUT IT WAS NEVER FOUND! SINCE JIM BARNES WAS SO CLOSE TO BOTH DISAPPEARING OBJECTS, A CLOUD OF SUSPICION FELL UPON HIM...
AND SO I WAS THINKING-- I'LL TAKE THE CASE AND DO WHAT I CAN...
OBVIOUSLY, JEAN IS COMPLETELY ABSORBED IN HER LATEST CASE! IF I'M EVER TO GET HER TO CONCENTRATE ON ME -- I'D BETTER HELP HER OUT ASAP--IS THE ATOM!
AFTER ESCORTING JEAN HOME AND RETURNING TO HIS OWN QUARTERS, RAY FINDS HIS ATTENTION HELD BY AN ITEM IN THE IVYTOWN HERALD...
HMM... JIM BARNES AS OUR LOCAL CHESS CHAMP IS GOING TO PLAY A VISITING EUROPEAN CHAMPION TOMORROW IN IVY HALL! AND WITH A PLATINUM CHESS SET VALUED AT $100,000-- LOANED BY A MILLIONAIRE CHESS ENTHUSIAST!
EARLY NEXT MORNING IN IVY HALL SCIENTIST RAY PALMER WONDERS THE INVISIBLE CONTROL OF HIS UNIQUE COSTUME SETTING IN NOTCH THE COSMIC FORCES WHICH ENABLE HIM TO REGULATE THE SIZE OF HIS BODY...
NOBODY'S AROUND TO SEE ME! I'M HOURS AHEAD OF TIME!
WHEN ONLY SIX INCHES TALL, HE SHRINKS UP A TABLE LEG...
WHEN I GET TO THE TOP I'LL MAKE MYSELF SO SMALL NO ONE WILL SEE ME--THEN WAIT...
AND WHEN THE RARE CHESS SET IS PLACED ON THE CHESS BOARD...
EVERYONE'S WATCHING JIM AND THE EUROPEAN CHAMPION MAKING THEIR PICTURES. TAKEN IN, NO ONE WILL NOTICE MY PRESENCE HERE...
PLATINUM CHESS PIECES
SHOWCASE
#54 JAN. 1960
22
AS THE CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY PROCEEDS THE ATOM IS HIDDEN INSIDE THE TURRET OF THE ROOK...
NOW WHEN THESE CHESS-PIECES DISAPPEAR--IF THEY DO--I'LL DISAPPEAR, RIGHT ALONG WITH 'EM--AND MAYBE LEARN WHAT REALLY HAPPENS!
AT THIS PRECISE MOMENT THE ATOM FEELS HIMSELF LIFTED HIGH INTO THE AIR WITH THE REST OF THE HAND-CARVED PIECES...
IT HAPPENED SO FAST--NOBODY SAW IT! JUST AS THE HAND IS QUICKER THAN THE EYE--SO WAS THE MYSTERIOUS FORCE THAT RAISED THE CHESS PIECES UPWARD!
THEY COME TO REST ON THE STONE LEDGE OF A WINDOW HIGH ABOVE THE EXCITED CROWD BELOW.
EVERYBODY'S RUSHING AROUND LOOKING FOR THE MISSING CHESSMEN. NO ONE'S THOUGHT OF LOOKING FOR THEM UP HERE! WHAT MADE THEM RISE LIKE THAT?
FOR HALF AN HOUR THE PLAY GOES ON--THEN EUROPEAN CHAMPION LADISLAUS HRABSANY REACHES OUT TO ADVANCE HIS QUEEN...
AS HE DOES SO...
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CHESS PIECES? THEY'VE DISAPPEARED!
I CAN SEE THE HEADLINE IN IVY PAPER NOW--
DISAPPEARING ACT? CRIMINAL STRIKES AGAIN!
STEVE LANE
THE HOURS PASS SLOWLY! NIGHT COMES AND GOES AND STILL THE ATOM REMAINS WITH THE CHESSMAN ITHEN IN THE FIRST PINK RAYS OF DAWN...
WE'RE MOVING!
NOW MAYBE I'LL LEARN WHO OR WHAT IS BEHIND THIS STRANGE OCCURRENCE!
FASTER AND FASTER FALL THE PIECES UNTIL THEY ARE PLUMMETING HARD WITH TERRIFIC SPEED...
SAUNDERS INTENDED TO ANNOUNCE HIS DISCOVERY BEFORE THE MEDICAL SOCIETY, BUT WAS KILLED IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT BEFORE HE COULD, SO...

ing was more nuanced, and less stylized than Carmine's, whose pencils were very tough to change. So as long as Giella had a slick finishing line, he couldn't change Carmine's stuff too much. And as a result it came out looking like Carmine's. I always felt my stuff was changed drastically by Joe Giella.

McKinnon: *It's too bad there aren't Photostats of your pencils from all those years.*

Kane: That was before they started using a plain paper copier (*laughter*).

McKinnon: *There are apparently a ton of Photostats of Kirby's work from the '60s.*

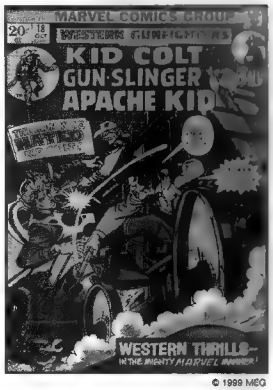
Kane: That's because Marvel had Xerox and Photostat machines. They made copies of the pencils just to have them in case there was any loss. Also, they were used as a basis for figuring out covers, which they always adapted from the story. When I became, more or less, Marvel's chief cover artist in the '70s, I used to get Xeroxes of everything. I used to throw out a lot of stuff, because I would get whole books. But I saved some of it. I kept some work by Frank Robbins and Ross Andru.

McKinnon: *What did you think of Ross Andru?*

Kane: He was superlative. While his art was stiff and lacked a certain fluidity, that guy could really draw! Andru understood structure and design and composition better than most of the other artists I ever knew. He had to be one of the two or three best comics designers I ever saw in my life; maybe the best. I used to keep Andru's work, as I felt it was instructional. He had every skill that I wanted to learn more about.

McKinnon: *I'll have to take another look at Andru's art…*

Kane: As Andru grew older, for some reason or other his work became stiffer and more angular. When artists age, their work changes. An excellent example of that is Jack Kirby's, which from my point of view changed enormously from the time Kirby started, through his peak period at Marvel during the early '60s. By the '70s, there was a kind of megalomaniac quality to the material—not that *he* was a megalomaniac. Kirby's images became very large. When he began in comics he was doing seven or eight panels to the page, then he eventually cut it down to six panels, then to four. And the figures within the panels were so big, especially those heads, that they would eat up all the space. It felt as though Kirby's later figures were barely contained, sort of appearing claustrophobic. I guess that Kirby started doing those two-page splashes because his shapes were so big that he needed room to spread out!



Kane's incredible western action on the cover of Marvel's Western Gunfighters #18 (Oct 1973)

Productiveness goes down and a sort of impoverishment occurs to artistic inventiveness. You can end up with distortions in the work. It's simply what happens with getting older, or if

Conversation with Gil Kane

you get ill. These past eight years I've struggled with my health, or I could have produced five times more work than I ended up doing. Joe Kubert is one of the longtime fellows who still produces like he used to, but there aren't many guys like Joe.

McKinnon: *How about Infantino? I really loved his work at DC, particularly on Adam Strange and the Flash. Some collectors I know felt his later work (1980s) was less compelling.*

Gil's rendition of the Atom's transformation made SF-Fantasy come alive for young readers

Kane: It's hard for a layperson to underestimate the kind of effort it takes to do material that's highly sophisticated. If you're away from it for a while, getting back to it becomes very hard. It's identical to the work of a professional musician who hasn't played an instrument for a long time. The musician would *never* think of being able to produce at a pro level without constant practice.

Art of any kind is something that takes an enormous amount of skill, effort, and constant practice. You may have the knowledge, but you have to refresh your techniques *constantly*. The minute you stop working, the solidity of your talent begins to fragment, gently but steadily. You still know the individual pieces, but the relationship to one another becomes lost. You lose the facility to handle and articulate each element and, at the same time, you lose the intuition that brings them together.

McKinnon: *What type of work would you prefer doing these days?*

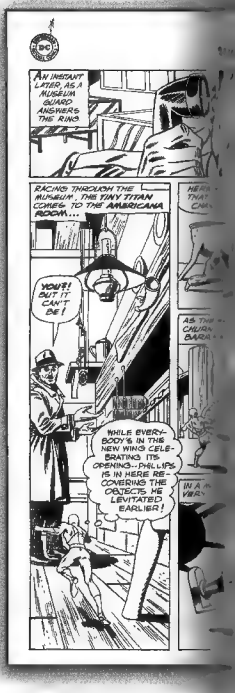
Kane: If I had my druthers, I would like to do material that has a sort of "epic" quality. I'd prefer doing very detailed work, and to work steadily, but at a fraction of the pace I have in the past. I would still bring it in very tight, doing complete pictures, frame by frame by frame, connecting them through the text and the prose. I'm stamped by a sort of romanticism in material. I see myself primarily as storyteller who likes drawing figures of an heroic and fantastic nature. I particularly enjoy westerns because they're raw: raw backgrounds, trees, water, rocks, horses, and wild animals—that sort of thing. I really enjoy creating exotic backgrounds. That's the type of thing I'd like to do, but unfortunately it's just not what anyone seems to be interested in buying!

McKinnon: *I believe there was an unpublished King Arthur series you worked on at DC that falls into that "epic" category...*

Kane: I did a first issue of King Arthur. I wrote it and penciled it, but we decided to give it up when it looked like there was no market. So I sold them something else called *The Killing Machine*. I wrote and produced three issues and they have them at DC. They were Archie Goodwin's material and he never got to it before he passed away. But if they're ever going to use it, I have to ink it because the breakdowns are for me and they would be very hard for someone else to ink. You see, when

SHOWCASE
#26
MOMENTS LATER...
SURE WAS LUCKY THAT HARD MAGNIFYING GLASS SLIPPED THAT RUSH OF YOURS, ATOM! AND TO MAKE SURE YOU NEVER BOTHER ME AGAIN!
I'LL BREAK THIS AMPULE OF POISON GAS--AND CLOSE THE LID ON THE BOX! THEN I'LL WRAP IT UP AND MAIL IT TO MY FRIEND ON THE COAST! BY THE TIME IT GETS THERE--YOU'LL BE DEAD!
AFTER WRAPPING AND ADDRESSING THE BOX OF SICILIAN CHEESEMAN, THE REPORTER QUICKLY SCANS A NEWSPAPER CLIPPING...
THAT PACKAGE WILL STAY PUT WHILE I RUSH OVER TO THE IVY MUSEUM--WHERE THE STAGE IS SET FOR MY NEXT "DISAPPEARING ACT" ROBBERY!
MEANWHILE, INSIDE THE BOX WHICH IS FILLED NOW WITH DEADLY VAPORS...
Cough! Cough! ARE ON FIRE! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF THIS BOX OR DIE!
I CAN MAKE MYSELF SO SMALL I COULD DASH BETWEEN THE MOLECULES OF THE BOX--BUT I HAVE TO GET UP SPEED TO DO THAT! THIS BOX IS TOO SMALL AND CLUTTERED FOR THAT! THEREFORE, I'LL TRY TO ESCAPE BY DOING THE REVERSE--INCREASE MY SIZE!
I'LL TURN ON THE CONTROLS WHICH REGULATE MY SIZE--AND AS I EXPAND, MY ENLARGING BODY, AND MY POWERFUL MUSCLES WILL UNITE TO FORCE THE LOCK--I HOPE!

SHOWCASE
#27
TALLER HE GROWS, AND STILL HE EXPANDS, AS HIS BODY ENLARGES UPWARD... UNTIL HIS PALMS TOUCH THE TOP OF THE BOX...
NOW COMES THE TOUGH PART! AS MY BODY EXPANDS WILL I BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN THE PRESSURE? OR WILL THE LOCK ON THE BOX PROVE TOO TOUGH FOR ME?
SWEAT BEADS HIS FACE AS HIS EVERY MUSCLE STRAINS TO THE BREAKING POINT TO MAINTAIN THE PRESSURE!
SOMETHING HAS TO GIVE! I JUST HOPE IT ISN'T--!
CONTORTED WITH EFFORT, NOT DARING TO BREATHE IN THE POISONOUS AIR, THE MIGHTY MITE EXERTS ALL HIS TERRIFIC STRENGTH...
IT ISN'T ENOUGH! I CAN'T--GO ON ANY LONGER! I'VE REACHED MY BREAKING POINT!
THE NEXT INSTANT, THE STEEL LOCK SNAPS, AND...
AHH! FRESH AIR!
HURRIEDLY THE TINY TITAN SCANS THE ROOM FOR PHILLIPS...
NO SIGN OF THE REPORTER--BUT WHAT'S THIS? A CLIPPING ABOUT THE IVY MUSEUM OPENING ITS NEW WING THIS MORNING! IF THIS IS PHILLIPS' NEXT ROBBERY, I BETTER ARRANGE TO GET THERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!
WORLD!!
AFTER TURNING ON A RADIO, THE ATOM DIALS THE MUSEUM...
WHEN THE RECEIVER AT THE OTHER END IS LIFTED, I'LL SHRINK MYSELF TO SUB-ATOMIC SIZE--AND BE SHOT THROUGH THE TELEPHONE CIRCUIT BY THE "SOUND OF MUSIC"!


AN INSTANT LATER, AS A MUSEUM GUARD ANSWERS THE RING...
RACING THROUGH THE MUSEUM, THE TINY TITAN COMES TO THE AMERICANA ROOM...
YOUR! BUT IT CAN'T BE!
WHILE EVERYBODY'S IN THE NEW WING CELEBRATING ITS OPENING--PHILLIPS IS IN HERE RECOVERING THE OBJECTS HE LEVITATED EARLIER!

I do my breakdowns, I work on a piece of paper and then tighten them up enough so that when I slip them under my piece of drawing paper, I can just ink, I don't have to re-pencil. All the information that I need is already on the earlier drawing.

McKinnon: *So you go right from breakdowns to inking?*

Kane: Right. During my last very productive period in comics, in the early '80s, that's the way I was able to do a whole book of *The Atom*, including the plot, pencils and inks, and a whole book of Superman in *Action Comics*. It added up to more than 50 pages of pencils and inks a month! That was only possible because of the technique that I used. Think of inking as a way of correcting your own pencils while you're working on them. While I'm inking, I often erase something that's in pencil, and re-adjust after some new insight. Or else, while I'm inking, I'm correcting heads, fingers, hands, everything... and giving it that final flourish. And now that I'm using blacks in order to create mood and atmosphere and a three- dimensional quality in the figures, I feel like this is my best period! Now all I want to do is live long enough to be able to do it!

McKinnon: *What do you like best about comics?*

KANE: For me, it's always the drawing. When collections of Hal Foster's *Prince Valiant* or Roy Crane's *Wash Tubbs* came out, I paid whatever they cost because, to me, it was worth it; there's nothing like it in the world! It isn't the words or reading that I've cared about, it's the pictures. They're *overwhelming!*

From the time I was a kid, the pictures mesmerized me. The early stuff was so *fun*. When I was growing up, *Dick Tracy* was in its infancy, and I must tell you that it was *absorbing*. Fantagraphics has been republishing some of the *Little Orphan Annie* material from the '30s, and when I read it I get that exact absorbed feeling. The characterizations and relationships are really wonderful! It's so sophisticated.

It makes me think about modern day pricing. Whatever it is that makes a strip outstanding justifies the price of the entire paper, but I don't believe that current comic book artwork alone justifies an $8 or $9 price all by itself. You need to have a total experience, and I just don't see it in as many places these days.

McKinnon: *How would you describe some of the problems of comics currently in production?*

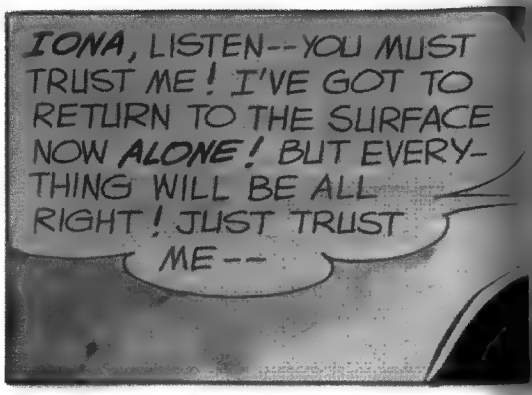
(Continued on page 60)

More than 25 years after publication, Kane's beautiful and compelling design elements used in the early Atom stories still thrill readers and collectors alike

SHOWCASE
#34 JAN FEB 29
SNATCHING UP A SHIELD, HE PROTECTS HIMSELF FROM THE TERRIBLE BARRAGE...
SECURING A FIRM GRIP ON THE SHIELD, HE HURLS IT THROUGH THE AIR LIKE A DISCUS...
STRAIGHT AS AN ARROW IT FLIES TO BLOCK THE DOORWAY JUST AS THE REPORTER IS ABOUT TO GO THROUGH...
OOOOF!
I'M SAFE-- BUT PHILLIPS IS GETTING AWAY! I ONLY ONE THING TO DO!
GOT TO MAKE AN ACCURATE A THROW AS I CAN--CATCH PHILLIPS WITH THE GOODS STILL ON HIM!
HERE'S YOUR THIEF, MISTER MAYOR! AND MISS LORING--THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CRIMES OF WHICH JIM BARNES HAS BEEN SUSPECTED!
I--I'VE HEARD ABOUT THE ATOM! NOW I'VE REALLY SEEN HIM!
I WANT TO THANK YOU--AGAIN--FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE TO HELP ME!
JEAN DOESN'T REALIZE IT--BUT THE MORE I HELP HER WIN HER LEGAL CASE, THE FASTER I CAN MARRY HER--AS RAY PALMER!

#36 JAN FEB 30
SOME DAYS LATER AT A CIVIL WEDDING CEREMONY IN CITY HALL, HANDY ONY SERVES AS BEST MAN...
RAY--THE RING! I'M SO DISTRAUGHT RIGHT BETWEEN MY FINGERS!
OH, NO! I DON'T TELL ME IT'S THAT "DISAPPEARING ACT" THIEF AGAIN...
HERE IT IS--OH THE FOOL! I GUESS, I'M--ER--SO NERVOUS, I DROPPED IT!
AND SO--
YOU KNOW, RAY--I THINK YOU PROPOSE TO ME YOU'LL GET THE ANSWER YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR SO PATIENTLY!
I'LL KEEP ON HELPING HER AS THE ATOM--UNTIL I DO!
Dear Reader:
WELL, THE ATOM EVER HAVE TO COMES TO THE ASSISTANCE OF JEAN LORING AGAIN IN HER TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS?
THAT DEPENDS ON YOU! LET KNOW OR YOU HAVE PURCHASED "DENSE-TRYOUT" ISSUES OF THE ATOM, AND IF ENOUGH OF YOU WRITE IN ASKING US TO CONTINUE PUBLISHING THE ATOM IN A MAGAZINE OF ITS OWN--WE'LL BE HAPPY TO DO SO! ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO:
THE ATOM,
% NATIONAL PERIODICALS,
575 LEXINGTON AVENUE,
NEW YORK 22, N.Y.

"Out of nowhere flashes the breath-taking figure of Green Lantern. Beaming his mighty power ring at a mystery missile over Coast City! Can the Emerald Crusader stop the plunging robot-bomb in time?"



IN A BETTER SILVER AGE

So ran the house ad for *Showcase* #22 in 1959, the first appearance of the Silver Age Green Lantern. The cover featured a sleek superhero flying over Manhattan opposite a yellow missile. Despite the wording of the ad, this Green Lantern did not "flash" out of nowhere. Rather, he was created in the late '50s just after the successful introduction of the first DC Silver Age hero, the fastest man alive... the Flash.

Green Lantern, and all of the DC Silver Age superheroes, were born in a time of great national insecurity and anxiety. In 1949, the Soviets exploded their first nuclear bomb. Two years before the Flash was introduced, the Soviets launched their first intercontinental ballistic missile and the first man-made satellite, Sputnik. Soon after the beginning of the Silver Age, President Kennedy warned that the United States faced a growing "missile gap." So Green Lantern was created at a time when political and military leaders were unable to guarantee protection and security. Superheroes became imaginary protectors for children nationwide.

GREEN LANTERN © 1999 DC

© 1999 DC

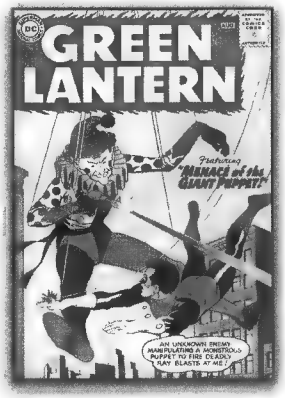
LIGHT: THE GREEN LANTERN

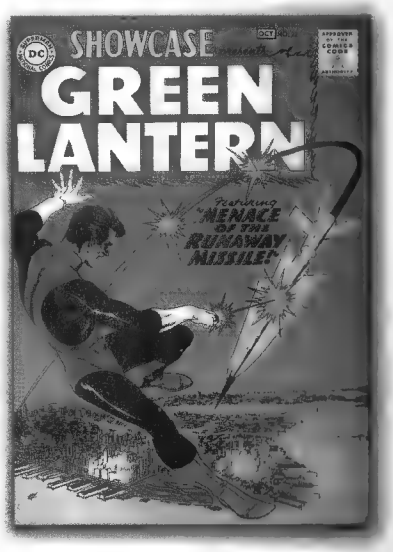
By Dr. Aaron Manson

The first two appearances of the Silver Age Green Lantern were in *Showcase* #22 and #23. Both issues featured covers with nuclear war themes. *Showcase* #22 showed a Nike surface-to-air missile falling on Manhattan. *Showcase* #23 showed an Invisible Destroyer detonating an atomic bomb. The Atomic Age anxiety appeared again on *Green Lantern* #4, where Green Lantern confronted a missile-bomb. As Michelle Nolan noted in *CBM* #46, DC comics "made very few references to nuclear power in its science fiction/fantasy comics during the early years of the Cold War." However, Green Lantern and his stories were an exception to the rule … a sort of pocket of awareness.

His Origin

The origin of Green Lantern was told three times, each subsequent version with a little more detail. The first two versions were in *Showcase* #22 and *Green Lantern* #1. However, the most complete explanation occurred as a back-up story in *Green Lantern* #16, "Earth's First Green Lantern." In that


GREEN LANTERN
Featuring "MENACE of the GIANT PUPPET!"
AN UNKNOWN ENEMY MANIPULATING A MONSTROUS PUPPET TO FIRE DEADLY RAY BLASTS AT ME!



Two landmark issues in the saga of the Silver Age Green Lantern… Showcase #22 (Sep/Oct 1959) and Green Lantern #1 (Jul/Aug 1960)

issue we learned that Abin Sur was a history professor on the planet Ungara. In a mythical tale that outdid even Star Wars, John Broome revealed how Green Lantern/Hal Jordan learned that his predecessor was a red-skinned spaceman who originally received the special power battery and ring from the Guardians. Abin Sur was battling an alien life-form intent upon conquering Earth when his spaceship accidentally crashed in the desert of the American Southwest.

GREEN LANTERN
SHE HURLED A REPELLING RAY AT ME! I MUST BE SOME WAY I CAN ESCAPE THIS MYSTERY WOMAN!
The SECRET LIFE of STAR SAPPHIRE!

Green Lantern #16 (Oct 1962) featured the origin of GL's sexy antagonist... Star Sapphire

His Character

Unlike Superman, who was a superhero by birth, or Flash, who became a superhero by accident, or Batman, who became a hero through childhood trauma, Green Lantern became a superhero by virtue of his character. In *Green Lantern* #1, Abin Sur told Hal Jordan, "It is our duty... when disaster strikes... to pass on the battery of power... to another who is fearless... and honest." So from the beginning, Green Lantern was a truly charismatic hero, someone who, by virtue of extraordinary personal qualities, received a gift of leadership.

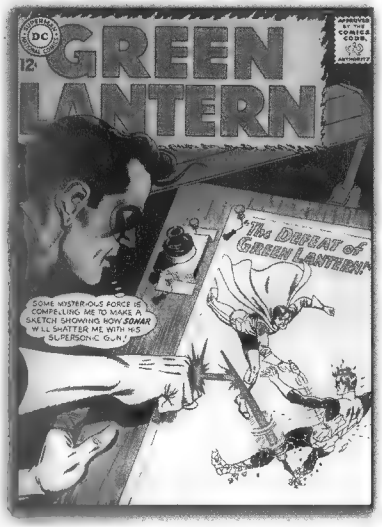
Green Lantern's personality was also a departure for DC. Unlike his well-adjusted contemporaries, Hal Jordan was a moody character with a dark side, and a loner who lived in a boarding house. Unlike Superman, who had two sets of parents, Hal had no home or childhood. Unlike the Flash with his congenial disposition and good-natured manner, Hal tended to brood and sulk. Unlike Barry Allen's straightforward romance with Iris West, Hal agonized about his multiple rejections by girlfriend/boss, Carol Ferris.

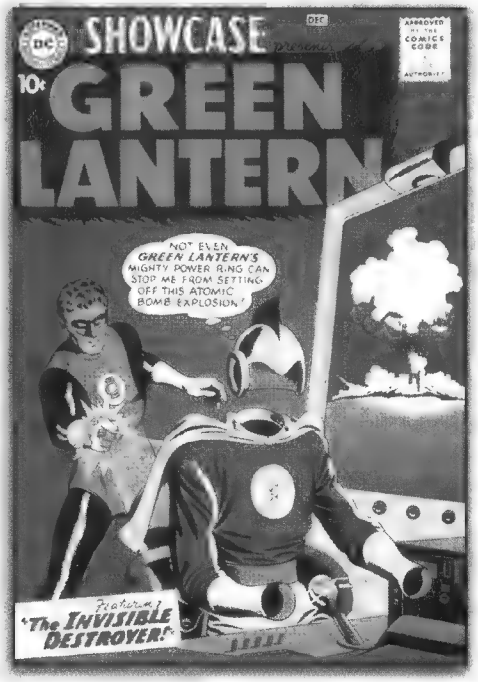
Sex and the Single Green Lantern

Sex was another new ingredient of Silver Age comics that surfaced in Green Lantern. Sexy "good girls" were common in the Golden Age, but thanks to Fredric Wertham and the U.S. Senate investigations, eroticism was wholly eliminated from comic books in 1954. However, one look at Star Sapphire on the cover of *Green Lantern* #16 and we knew that another era was beginning. There was a shapely Carol Ferris in pink hot pants, leather boots and a skin-tight leotard, shooting electricity at Green Lantern!

In 1962, the only other female superheroes were Wonder Woman and Supergirl, and both were scrupulously asexual. Star Sapphire became a sexy version of Wonder Woman. Like Wonder Woman, she came from a culture of Amazon-type female warriors, the "Zamarons" (switch two letters and you get Amazon). The Zamarons' planet was "tremendously in advance of ours, scientifically." On Zamaron, the women ruled and "men are a distinctly inferior species." Equipped with powers equal to Green Lantern's, Star Sapphire/Carol Ferris ardently desired to defeat Green Lantern and make him serve as her "consort." We can, therefore, add to the list of Julius Schwartz' and John Broome's accomplishments the fact that despite the Comics Code they were able to introduce a dominatrix into Silver Age comics!

Green Lantern #19 (Mar 1963) hinted at GL's comic book origin by showing the Emerald Gladiator "on the drawing board." Showcase #23 (Nov/Dec 1959) exploited the Nation's atomic fears


GREEN LANTERN
The DEFEAT of GREEN LANTERN!
SOME MYSTERIOUS FORCE IS COMPELLING ME TO MAKE A SKETCH SHOWING HOW SONAR WILL SHATTER ME WITH HIS SUPERSONIC GUN!


SHOWCASE
GREEN LANTERN
NOT EVEN GREEN LANTERN'S MIGHTY POWER RING CAN STOP ME FROM SETTING OFF THIS ATOMIC BOMB EXPLOSION!
Featuring "The INVISIBLE DESTROYER!"

The Art

Green Lantern comics resulted from a collaboration of some of the best talents in the history of comicdom—Julius Schwartz, John Broome, Gil Kane, Joe Giella, Murphy Anderson, and a few others. Images of the two chief innovators can be found on the cover of *Green*

Lantern #17—perhaps Julius Schwartz and the back of Gil Kane's head at a storyboard. Gil Kane's drawings of Green Lantern were graceful, sleek, and elegant. Green Lantern had no bulky cape. When flying in outer space, he required no cumbersome space suit. His trim figure could fly anywhere and through anything. More than anything else, the drawings of Green Lantern expressed personal freedom. Take a look at his hair's front curl on the cover of *Green Lantern* #19. It seems to be alive, with a will of its own.

The inks and colors complimented the drawings perfectly. Inked by Joe Giella or Murphy Anderson, the early issues are in bold dramatic colors: deep, soulful greens, black, magenta and royal purple.

"THE PATROL SQUAD WAS ARMED WITH THE LATEST WEAPONS! IT DID THEM NO GOOD, FOR BY THAT TIME..."
MORE OF THE CREATURES!
OUR HIGH-SPEED NUCLEAR BLASTS--BOUNCING RIGHT OFF THEM!

A patrol in the year 5700 discovers their nuclear rifles are useless against the Gila monster-like Zegors in Green Lantern #8

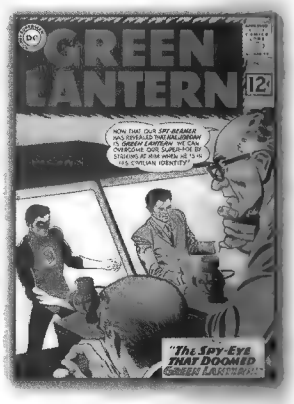
His Power

Green Lantern was nearly as powerful as an ancient Greek or Roman god. In this technological age of the '90s, a power ring may seem pretty tame, however Green Lantern's power was limited only by John Broome's imagination. Which is to say, not at all! Green Lantern's power was so nearly godlike that the writers decided to give him one weakness, the color yellow, due to an impurity in the power battery.

Writers have noted that the idea of Superman, as created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, owed some debt to Nietzsche, who initiated the name and concept in 1882. But perhaps even more than Superman, Green Lantern is Nietzsche's concept of the modern man. Did the editors at DC read Nietzsche? Interestingly, one Green Lantern story, "The Will to Power" (*Emerald Dawn II*, issue #4, 1991) was also the title of a book by Nietzsche.

The Guardians of the Universe

Green Lantern was created at a time when political leaders appeared to have failed safeguarding humankind. It must have reassured a lot of young comics readers to learn that there were omnipotent, blue-skinned, wise old men in the sky who could protect us! Though the Guardians were not mentioned in the first Green Lantern story, they were clearly essential to the origin and appeared in *Green Lantern* #1 (August 1960). In that story, Hal Jordan's "energy twin" met the Guardians on the planet Oa, where he was interviewed and accepted into the elite club of interplanetary agents known as Green Lanterns. Actually, the first appearance of the Guardians was eight years earlier, in *Strange Adventures* #22 (July 1952). This story, "The Guardians of the Clockwork Universe," written by John Broome and drawn by Murphy Anderson, featured Captain Comet as the Earth hero who was called to a distant planet by the orange-skinned, silver-haired Guardians of the Universe. The old men, who were "not men of action," found able, young heroes to serve them. These Guardians safeguarded the order of the galaxy by timing, in clockwork fashion, the movements of the planets and stars. In the Silver Age, their function was expanded. They became the Guardians of moral order in the universe, and they had an omnipotent power source, their special battery, in order to do it.



The bespectacled man on the cover of GL #17 bears an uncanny resemblance to DC editor Julius Schwartz!

The Silver Age origin of the Guardians was told in *Green Lantern* #40 (October 1965). This key issue featured a cover drawn by Gil Kane and inked by Murphy Anderson. Readers learned that the Guardians were descended from a race of godlike immortals who "never needed sleep or rest." One of them, a scientist named Krona, was an overly-ambitious man who broke "the one great forbidden rule" of Oa. He wanted to learn the secret origin of all things. In what was perhaps the most ambitious piece John Broome ever wrote, he tried to explain the origin of the

Guardians, the origin of the Green Lanterns, and the origin of evil in the Universe, all in one story. Broome borrowed heavily from the story of the Fall From Grace in the Bible. Like Adam and Eve, who tasted the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Krona built a machine to learn his secret origins. He failed, but his attempt unleashed evil in the Universe. The Oans punished Krona, and to further atone for his crime they created "assistants," the Green Lanterns, to protect justice in the Universe. Their purpose was to battle evil and aid "all creatures of good will." Thus, the original Guardians were intergalactic Good Samaritans, motivated mainly by guilt—not ambition!

WHAT IS THE DOUBLE LIFE OF STAR SAPPHIRE?
GREEN LANTERN
12¢
STAR SAPPHIRE VS. GREEN LANTERN
IN A SUPER-BATTLE OF THE SEXES!
IF HE WINS—HE LOSES!
AND IF HE LOSES—HE WINS!

GL #41 (Dec 1965) features the double life of Star Sapphire... written by Gardner Fox

Why Did Green Lantern Die?

"The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. 'Where is God?,' he cried; I will tell you. We have killed him – you and I – God is dead." **– Nietzsche**

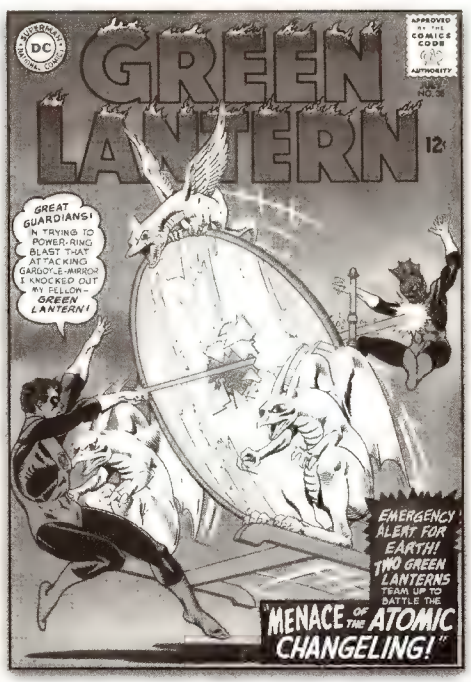
With all these wonderful elements —exceptional art and stories and even pretty "good girls," why did Green Lantern have to die? Well, he didn't die only once. By my count, he has died at least four times. In fact, after 1965, it seemed like every time a new Green Lantern comic came out Hal Jordan was dying.

Green Lantern's first death, a sort of death of the spirit, occurred in *Green Lantern* #76 (April 1970). The editors at DC, recalling those heady years, have explained:

"Green Lantern was, in effect, a cop. An incorruptible cop, to be sure, with noble intentions, but still a cop, a crypto-fascist; he took orders, he committed violence at the behest of commanders whose authority he did not question–Wasn't this the mentality that sent American troops into Korea and Vietnam? That brought Federal Marshals' clubs down on the heads of lunch counter protesters?" **– Dennis O'Neil**

GL #4 (Jan/Feb 1961) contains one of the classic tales of the anti-matter universe of Qward. Two Green Lanterns team-up in GL #38 (Jul 1965) to battle the "Menace of the Atomic Changeling!"

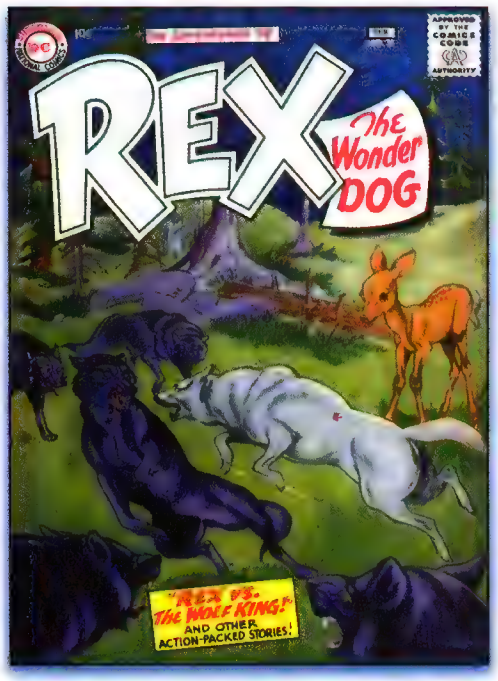
Revealed at Last! "THE SECRET OF GREEN LANTERN'S MASK!"
GREEN LANTERN
FOR SOME MYSTERIOUS REASON MY POWER RING HAS NO EFFECT ON THAT FLYING BOMB! WHICHEVER WAY I TURN—IT SWERVES RIGHT AFTER ME!
featuring The DIABOLICAL MISSILE from QWARD!

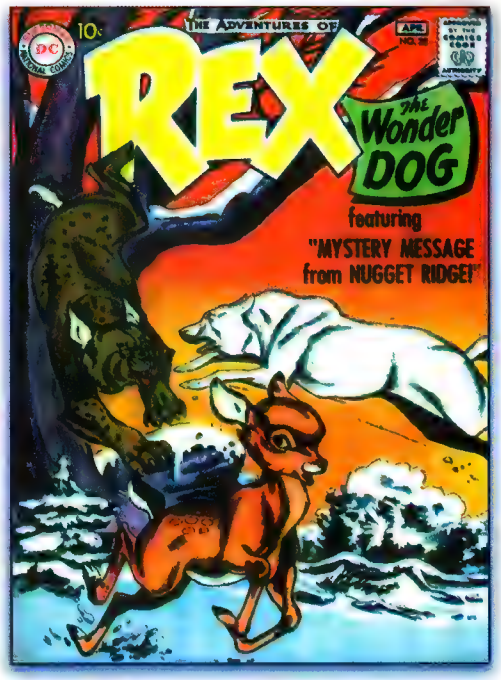

GREEN LANTERN
12¢
GREAT GUARDIANS! IN TRYING TO POWER-RING BLAST THAT ATTACKING GARGOYLE-MIRROR I KNOCKED OUT MY FELLOW-GREEN LANTERN!
EMERGENCY ALERT FOR EARTH! TWO GREEN LANTERNS TEAM UP TO BATTLE THE "MENACE OF THE ATOMIC CHANGELING!"

I was nine years old when *Showcase* #22 first appeared, and I did not think of Green Lantern as a cop. An Emerald Gladiator, yes; even an Emerald Crusader. However, future issues displayed a very different Hal Jordan than the one who emerged "out of nowhere" in 1959.

Perhaps Green Lantern had to die because he was too perfect. He symbolized a fusion of personal freedom with a respect for moral authority. In an age that was and continues to be skeptical of authority, his attitude has often seemed obsolete. Many great thinkers have noted that we both love and hate figures of moral authority, often secretly wishing for their demise. So, in a sense, the death of Green Lantern is also a beginning. His stories are ones which will continue to be enjoyed by comics readers as a permanent legacy.

KANE ON KANE "GREY-TONE" COVERS





A quartet of highly collectible, post-Code 10¢ **Adventures of Rex, the Wonder Dog**... all with beautiful Kane on Kane grey-tone or "wash" covers. Issues shown are #31 (Jan/Feb 1957); #38 (Mar/Apr 1958); #39 (May/Jun 1958); and #42 (Nov/Dec 1958)

COURTESY THE PETER JONES COLLECTION

KANE on KANE Covers: STRANGE ADVENTURES

10¢ ALL NEW STORIES
NO. 65
STRANGE ADVENTURES
Featuring "The PRISONER From PLUTO!"
THANKS TO THIS BRAIN-CONVERTER, WHEN THEY RELEASE MY CELLMATE TOMORROW, I'LL BE WALKING OUT IN HIS BODY!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

Strange Adventures #65 (Feb 1956) "The Rock-And-Roll Kid from Mars!"

JUNE
STRANGE ADVENTURES
Featuring A DOUBLE-LENGTH SCIENCE-FICTION THRILLER... "HEART of the SOLAR SYSTEM!"
THE MECHANICAL HEART-BEAT IS SLOWING DOWN! IF IT STOPS—THE WHOLE SOLAR SYSTEM WILL DIE!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

Strange Adventures #93 (Jun 1958) classic "Heart of the Solar System!" black cover

Strange Adventures #94 (Jul 1958) Murphy Anderson's "Elevator to the Future!"

Strange Adventures #98 (Nov 1958) black cover

ALL FOUR WHITE MTN COPIES

Strange Adventures #99 (Dec 1958) Soldiers vs. Flying Saucers cover, Murphy Anderson's "The Amazing High-Low Weapon!"

Strange Adventures #103 (Apr 1959) classic "The Man Who Harpooned Worlds!" black cover

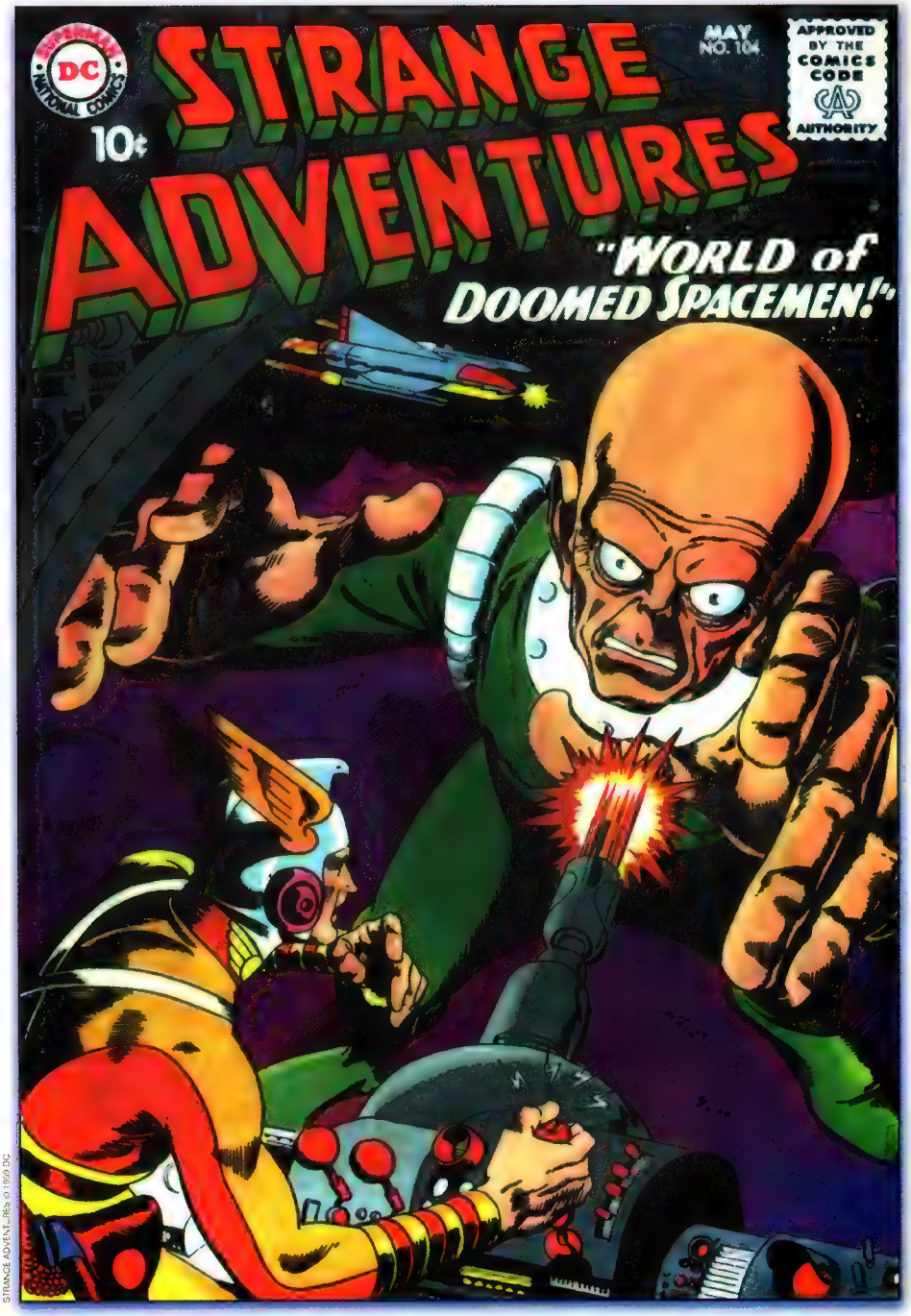
STRANGE ADVENTURES
NO WEAPON ON EARTH WAS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO STOP... "The INVASION of the WATER-WARRIORS!"
A GIGANTIC, LIVING BLOB OF WATER--STREAMING THROUGH THE CITY!

Strange Adventures #105 (Jun 1959)

Strange Adventures #116 (May 1960)

STRANGE ADVENTURES © 1999 DC

At the pinnacle of DC's Silver Age, **Strange Adventures** #113 (Feb 1960) hit the stands with one of Kane's most compelling and beautiful sci-fi covers illustrating the story "The Deluge from Space!" Kane's layout and composition moves the reader from alien to skyscraper to rowboat... and back again without ever forcing the eye to leave the cover. Also a special note is the way Kane illustrates water... with angular peaks and dark valleys, Kane infuses his raging sea with a menacing life of its own



STRANGE ADVENTURES © 1999 DC

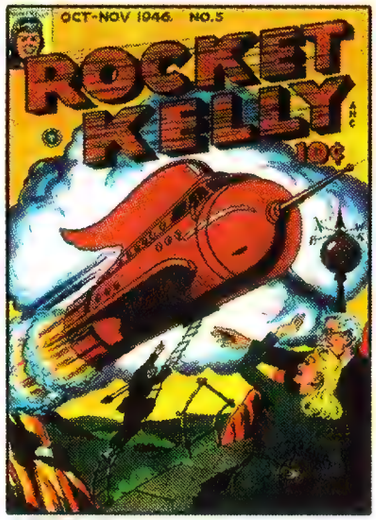
Considered by many 1950's sci-fi enthusiasts, Gil Kane aficionados, and DC Silver Age collectors to be among the great cover classics of all time, **Strange Adventures** #104 (May 1959) hit the stands on the East coast on March 25, 1959. Kane's compelling perspective, the bulging eyes and bulbous head of the alien, and the Flash Gordon-esque hero with winged helmet... created an eye-catching package irresistible to young readers of the late 1950s

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE
GERBER PHOTO-JOURNAL GUIDE
White Space Stickers (SET #2)

Unseen Gold by Matt Nelson

348-13

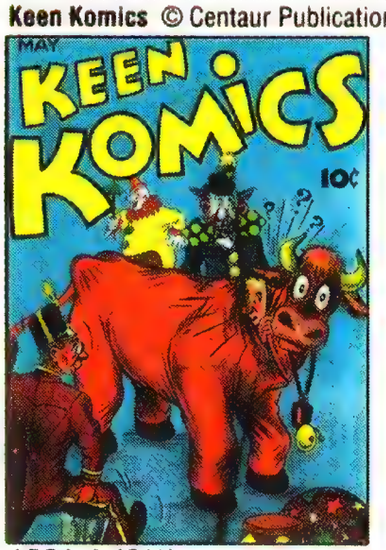
CATMAN #13 (Sep 1942, Holyoke, cover by Chas A. Quinlan) place in Vol. I, pg 152, 348-13. Scarcity rating: "9"



1590-5

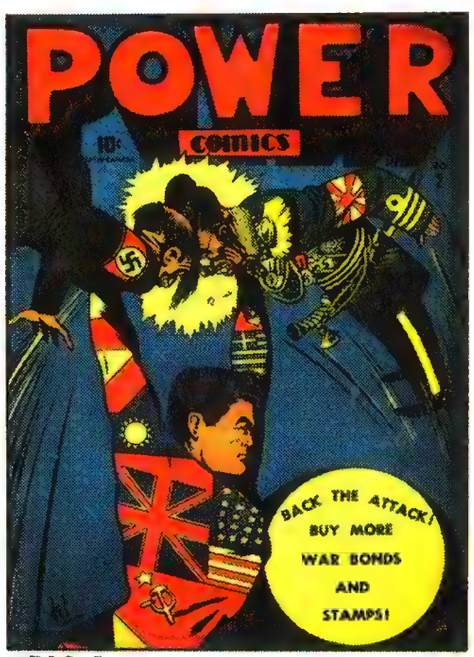
ROCKET KELLY #5 (Oct/Nov 1946, Fox Features Syn., cover by ??) place in Vol. II, pg 576, 1590-5. Scarcity rating: "8"

Keen Komics © Centaur Publications



1021-1 (2/1)

KEEN KOMICS V2#1 (May 1939, Centaur, cover by Max Neill) place in Vol. II, pg 413, 1021-1. Scarcity rating: "9"



1509-2

POWER COMICS #2 (1944?, Holyoke, cover by Maurice del Burgo) place in Vol. II, pg 553, 1509-2. Scarcity rating: "8"

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PO Box 180700, Coronado, CA 92178

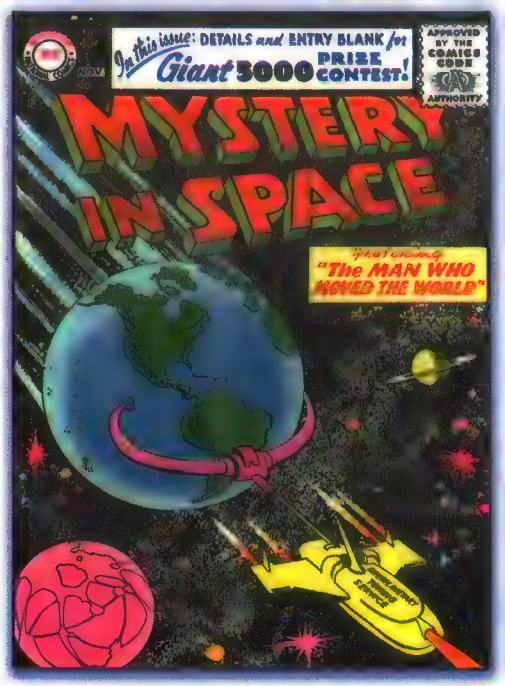
KANE on KANE Covers: MYSTERY IN SPACE

MYSTERY IN SPACE
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
"The IMPOSSIBLE WORLD NAMED EARTH!"
THE MIND MACHINE CLEARLY REVEALS MY PATIENT'S DELUSIONS! HE ENVISIONS A GREEN PLANET FAR OFF IN SPACE WHOSE MOST FAMOUS LEADER IS NAMED IZEN-HOWER!

Mystery In Space #30 (Feb/Mar 1956) with President Eisenhower on cover

ALL NEW STORIES
APR-MAY
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MYSTERY IN SPACE
featuring "The DAY THE EARTH SPLIT IN TWO!"
LOOK--THERE'S OUR DESTINATION--EARTH! BUT ONE HALF HAS BEEN SLICED AWAY--AS THOUGH BY SOME GIANT BLADE!

Mystery In Space #31 (Apr/May 1956) classic cover "The Day the Earth Split in Two!"


In this issue: DETAILS and ENTRY BLANK for Giant $5000 PRIZE CONTEST!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MYSTERY IN SPACE
featuring "The MAN WHO MOVED THE WORLD"

Mystery In Space #34 (Oct/Nov 1956) classic cover "The Man who Moved the World"

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MYSTERY IN SPACE
PLEASE DON'T TELL YOUR FRIENDS WHICH EARTH IS... "The COUNTERFEIT PLANET!"
TWO EARTHS IN SPACE! IF WE CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHICH ONE IS THE REAL EARTH, WE'RE DOOMED--BECAUSE THE OTHER ONE IS A TRAP!

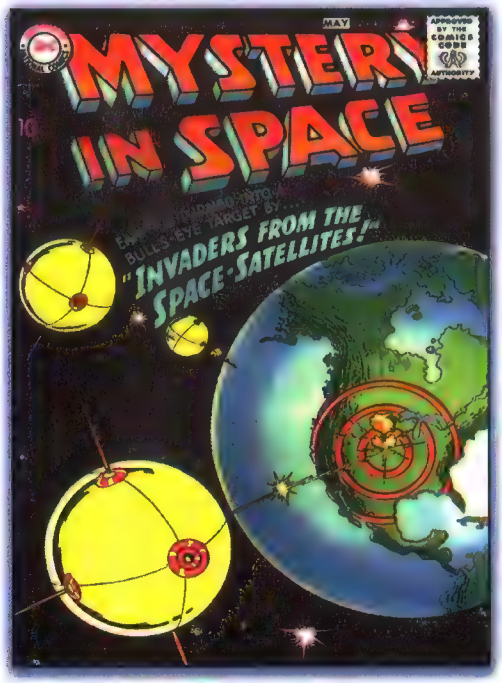
Mystery In Space #35 (Dec '56/Jan '57) classic cover "The Counterfeit Planet!"

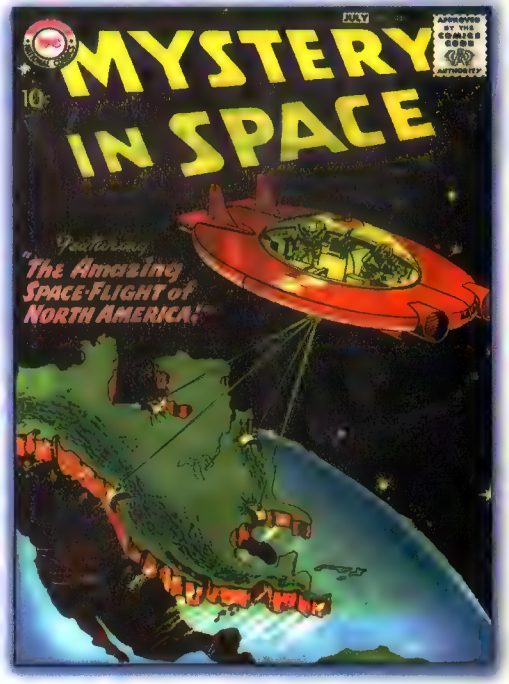
JULY
MYSTERY IN SPACE
10¢
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
WE DEFY YOU TO SOLVE THE AMAZING MYSTERY OF THE CANALS of EARTH!
LOOK! SINCE WE LEFT EARTH, IT'S BECOME CRISS-CROSSED WITH GIANT CANALS--JUST LIKE THE PLANET MARS!

MAR
MYSTERY IN SPACE
10¢
Featuring "Secret of the SKYSCRAPER-SPACESHIP!"
IT'S A SPACESHIP FROM EARTH! WE MUST PREVENT IT FROM LANDING ON MARS!

Mystery In Space #38 (Jun/Jul 1957) classic cover "The Canals of Earth!"

Mystery In Space #42 (Feb/Mar 1958) classic cover "Secret of the Skyscraper-Spaceship!"





Mystery In Space #43 (Apr/May 1958) classic cover, Carmine Infantino's "Invaders from the Space-Satellites!"

Mystery In Space #44 (Jun/Jul 1958) classic cover "The Amazing Space-Flight of North America!" and Murphy Anderson's "Earthman Go Home!"

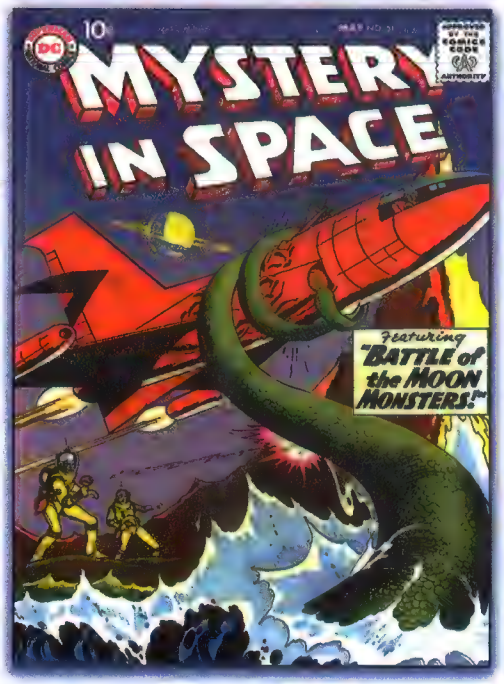
KANE on KANE Covers: MYSTERY IN SPACE

10¢
OCT. NO. 47
MYSTERY IN SPACE
THE EARTH PLAYS A CRUCIAL GAME OF SURVIVAL IN...
INTERPLANETARY TUG-OF WAR!
COME ON, EARTH-SHIPS! PULL! PULL!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

Mystery In Space #47 classic cover "Interplanetary Tug-of-War!" and Murphy Anderson's incredible "The Surprise Package Planet!"

10¢
FEB
MYSTERY IN SPACE
THE EARTH'S DIAMETER OF 7900 MILES HAS SHRUNK TO 3 FEET! I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO RETURN TO MY NATIVE WORLD!
featuring "THE SKY-HIGH MAN!"
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

Mystery In Space #49 (Feb 1959) classic cover "The Sky-High Man!"



Mystery In Space #51 (May 1959) classic cover, Carmine Infantino's "Battle of the Moon Monsters!"

10¢
JUNE NO. 52
MYSTERY IN SPACE
featuring "MIRROR MENACE of MARS!"
CAN'T BREAK LOOSE FROM THAT ALIEN'S POWERFUL GRIP — I'M BEING PULLED INTO THE MIRROR MOUNTAIN!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

Mystery In Space #47 (Oct 1958) Kane's incredible classic cover "Mirror Menace of Mars!"

ALL COVERS © 1999 DC

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A look at the earliest episodes of the Golden Age Green Lantern

The Golden Age Green Lantern was an amazing amalgam that combined theme, character development, the mystery of the power ring, and great artwork to produce one of the landmark strips of the Golden Age. It's interesting to note that the original GL (like his Silver Age counterpart) was truly different from all the other DC/All American heroes. Not only were his skills and powers unique among heroes, but GL's costume is still-considered one of the most intriging and colorful of the era.

A CRIME AND WAR COMIC

The plots in the earliest stories revolved around Green Lantern's adventures in fighting racketeers, crooked politicians, and common criminals. The only criminal foe during the first year who stands out as a potential "super-villain" was the Spider. The Spider was a murderous dwarf who looks like a refugee from Will Eisner's *Spirit* strip. Nevertheless GL dispatches him fairly easily in the last four pages of a 10-page story in *All American* #28 (July 1941).

The thematic and plot devices were pulled from the newspaper headlines and popular pulp magazines. The country was just coming out of the Great Depression and this time spawned many high profile racketeers, gangsters, and criminals. The list included Al Capone, Dutch Schulz, Meyer Lansky, Ma Barker, John Dillinger, Bonnie & Clyde and many others. Crime was on the national consciousness and interestingly, the public alternately disliked these corrupt characters, but was also fascinated by them. The early Green Lantern stories were almost exclusively pre-occupied

The Master of Light!

with the vital struggle against these malefactors. The early GL scripts written by Batman co-creator Bill Finger played directly into this national obsession with crime and criminals.

The crime comic book conventions were imported from motion pictures, the pulp magazines and the newspaper comic strips. When one reads these early Green Lantern stories one is reminded of the popular movie serials that were produced during this time. Action was the focus and lots of rather primitively choreographed fistfights were the order of the day in the movies of the period. Without realizing these conventions it seems illogical that a character in possession of such an awesome weapon as the power ring would use his fists to subdue his foes. Perhaps it went against the standards of manliness for Green Lantern to only use his ring to do the job. It seems that the writer was learning how to use the ring as much as his fictional alter-ego was.

Besides the dominant crime element, another theme was beginning to assert itself. From our vantage point the greater threat to national survival seemed to lay overseas. There was a strong isolationist tendency that lasted well into the late 1930s and early 1940s. America had largely pulled away from foreign involvement after World War I and was pre-occupied with its own problems. The mood of America was to stay neutral of foreign engagement. As mentioned above, one of the major problems the U.S. had been dealing with was crime.

Some comics, like Timely's *Captain America*, which debuted six to eight months after Green Lantern's initial *All-American* appearance (#16, July 1940), dealt with sabotage and foreign spies. However, it was only when America entered the war after Pearl Harbor did the comic book fight against the Axis powers begin in earnest. Only in the last story in *Green Lantern* #1 (Fall 1941) do we see our hero going up against hostile foreign enemies who had evil designs on the United States. This was in Fall 1941—only months before the U.S. entry into the war.

EARLY TALES OF THE POWER RING

The power ring (and lamp) of the Golden Age was initially presented as a weapon with specific powers. The ring was operated by the will power of Alan Scott, but was exercised within definite perimeters. In the premiere outing (*AAC* #16), Alan Scott uses his ring to fly, walk through walls, and make his body impervious to gunfire and metal objects (such as knives). This story also introduces the ring's weakness to wooden objects and the 24-hour time limit of power. After Alan is decked by a wooden club he muses, "Guess I'm only immune to metals." In this story he explains "I also seem to possess only my normal strength" as he wades into the bad guys with his fists. On the first page of many of these early stories these primary powers of the ring were enumerated. However, the variety of ring powers began to expand as the series progressed.

In *AAC* #17 GL melts massive steel girders and cuts through chains. In *AAC* #18 he uses the ring to shatter a knife as though it were glass. This story also introduced the ring's "mental powers." GL commands the ring to read a gangster's mind (this also happens in *GL* #1). Green Lantern produces a ring-generated ray as a battering ram (*AAC* #19) to topple his criminal opponent off balance. He uses the ring to stall a runaway car in *AAC* #20. In the following issue he has the ring to reveal "any evil" in a gangster's hotel room where there is a hidden time bomb. GL flees the room but is caught in the bomb blast and is temporarily knocked unconscious. In this story he power-beams a car to halt its headlong plunge off a cliff.

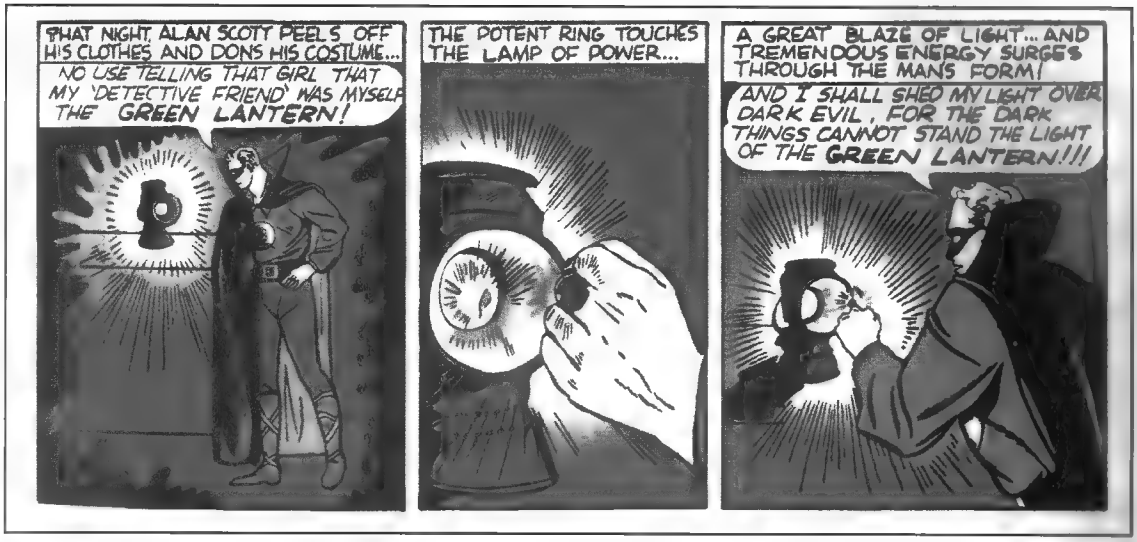
In *AAC* #22 the ring began having an effect on Alan Scott's overall strength. While battling some crooks GL hoists a criminal over his head and "with Herculean strength the Green Lantern lifts a struggling man and hurls him upon the others." Later a rubber blackjack fells GL. While unconscious one of the crooks takes the power ring off GL's finger and places it on his own. This proves a fatal error as the ring burns the criminal's body with an intense green "inner fiery light." The caption reads "Once more the power of the green flame has brought punishment on an evil doer."

In follow-on issues, GL uses the ring to paralyze a couple of prison guards and to wipe out the memories of several hoodlums (*AAC* #23); down a fighter plane by knocking out its engine in (*AAC* #24); blind a man (*AAC* #25 and in *GL* #1); and hypnotize a crook and make him tell his nefarious plans to harm Irene Miller (*AAC* #30). In *GL* #1 the "Master of Light" even uses the ring to create a green envelope… "a cold halo" around his body… "to resist the heat of roaring flames" when he rescues a little girl from a burning building. This halo or green envelope idea was used many times by the Silver Age Green Lantern.

BILL FINGER & THE BATMAN CONNECTION

Bill Finger used several similar thematic elements in the early Green Lantern stories as he did in the seminal Batman tales. First, Chris Lambert in his recent overview of (*CBM* #70) mentions the early Batman as dealing merciless and deadly justice to his criminal foes. Something similar happened in the early Golden Age GL stories.

Consider just a few examples: In the origin story (*AAC* #16) the crooked contractor, Dekker, died of an apparent heart attack after Alan Scott threatens to drop him from the sky; in the next issue the racketeer Muller kills his partner-in-crime, "Commissioner Gorson" (awful close to "Commissioner Gordon"); in *AAC* #18 the criminal Murdock while fighting GL on the perisphere at the 1939-40 World's Fair slips and falls to his death; in the following issue the gangster Slade falls into a vat of lye and dies "a horrible" death; the crooked lawyer Strake turns on his flunky (Tipper) and guns him down (*AAC* #21); a former crime boss, Al Maloney, and Frankie Fowler killed each other in a hail of bullets (*AAC* #23); the criminal Harkiss dies "a terrible death" by being flipped into a crucible of white-hot molten steel by GL. GL's bland comment after this scene, "Well… that just about


THAT NIGHT, ALAN SCOTT PEELS OFF HIS CLOTHES AND DONS HIS COSTUME...
NO USE TELLING THAT GIRL THAT MY 'DETECTIVE FRIEND' WAS MYSELF THE GREEN LANTERN!
THE POTENT RING TOUCHES THE LAMP OF POWER...
A GREAT BLAZE OF LIGHT... AND TREMENDOUS ENERGY SURGES THROUGH THE MANS FORM!
AND I SHALL SHED MY LIGHT OVER DARK EVIL, FOR THE DARK THINGS CANNOT STAND THE LIGHT OF THE GREEN LANTERN!!!

winds up Mr. Harkiss's evil career—and the case!" (*AAC* #25). In the later stories the blood-letting is toned down.

Another similarity relating Batman and GL is their rationale for donning a costume. A pensive Bruce Wayne proclaims, "Criminals are a superstitious, cowardly lot, so my disguise must be able to strike terror in their heart." Likewise a determined Alan Scott thinks, "If I must fight evil beings, I must make myself a dreaded figure! I must have a costume that is so bizarre that once I am seen I will never be forgotten." Unlike Batman, Green Lantern's rather garish (and bizarre) costume would hardly make him a "dreaded figure"—his power ring, yes, his costume, no.

A third similarity between Batman and Green Lantern was the addition of a sidekick. However, unlike the Caped Crusader who gained a boy assistant in the form of Robin, GL's "partner" in crime fighting was the rambunctious Doiby Dickles. Robin was introduced at the end of Batman's first year in *Detective* and similarly Doiby Dickles was introduced at the end of Green Lantern's first year in *All American*. Robin's premiere gave Batman someone to talk to and lightened the somber tone of the strip. Doiby Dickles likewise added humor to otherwise routine stories.

Finally, Batman was the supreme night crime fighter, In like fashion, the early Green Lantern carried out most of his crime busting exploits under the cover of darkness, too. Batman's somber garb seemed appropriate for exploits at night. In contrast, GL's costume, with its bright colors, seemed somehow better suited for daytime crime fighting.

I think it's fair to say that the early Green Lantern stories did resemble the early Batman episodes. Here's eight reasons why...

(1) Bruce Wayne (Batman) vows to fight crime after the murder of his parents. Alan Scott (Green Lantern) proclaims, "I must continue to fight against evil!" after the murder of his co-workers in a sabotaged train wreck.

(2) Bruce Wayne creates a costume in order to "strike terror" in the hearts of criminals. Alan Scott ponders that his costume must make himself "a dreaded figure."

(3) The early Batman was a crime busting creature of the night. Similarly, most of Green Lantern's stories took place at night.

(4) Bruce Wayne is portrayed as a wealthy, pipe-smoking, sophisticated bachelor. Alan Scott is portrayed as a not-so-wealthy, pipe-smoking bachelor.

(5) The first year of his strip in *Detective*, Batman was depicted as a lone and sometimes brutal vigilante against criminals. The first year of his strip in *All American* Green Lantern was depicted as a lone and sometimes brutal vigilante against racketeers and criminals.

(6) Only minor villains such as Hugo Strange and Dr. Death appear during Batman's first year. Only minor villains like Spider and Lupo appear during Green Lantern's first year.

(7) At the end of Batman's first year in *Detective* he is joined by a young assistant, Robin the Boy Wonder. The tone of the strip lightens up appreciably. At the end of Green Lantern's first year in *All American* he is joined by a not-so-young, corpulent assistant, Doiby Dickles. Doiby added a measure of much needed humor to the stories.

(8) Batman had a variety of weapons and gadgets in his utility belt while Green Lantern had one weapon (his ring) but with a variety of uses.

A reason for these thematic similarities was the guiding hand of seminal Batman and Green Lantern scripter, Bill Finger. While developing the idea of Batman Bob Kane met Bill Finger who made valuable contributions to the genesis of the Batman mythos. So much so that prominent comic historians such as Jerry Bails give Finger co-creator status with Bob Kane on Batman. Similarly, Finger was assigned by editor Shelly Mayer to work with artist Mart Nodell in fleshing out the Green Lantern concept and wrote all the early stories.

As for the visuals, Bob Kane had artistic assistants like Jerry Robinson and others, but only his name was attached to the strip. During the first year Mart Nodell shared art chores on Green Lantern with ghost artists E. E. Hibbard and Irwin Hasen... but only his name (with Finger's) appear on the early stories.

Writer Bill Finger seems to have transported many of the successful conventions of the Batman strip to Green Lantern. However, for Green Lantern to attain and retain the popularity he enjoyed during the 1940s, his later writers and artists had to expand and go beyond these imitative aspects. But any way you slice it, the very early Golden Age Green Lantern stories are fascinating to read and provide a great deal of compelling information for further research.

A CBM EXCLUSIVE

After Jack Kirby died in 1994, I had the good fortune to interview a host of Kirby's peers regarding his legacy. One of those peers was Gil Kane, and when I asked Kane for some commentary on Kirby, Kane launched into an extemporaneous discourse that not only placed Kirby in proper historical context, and opened my eyes to a much greater appreciation of Kirby the man, but also gave me valuable insights into Kane's own career. A shortened version of the interview was printed, but I have long hoped to make the full Kane commentary available. Thanks to CBM, that opportunity is finally here!

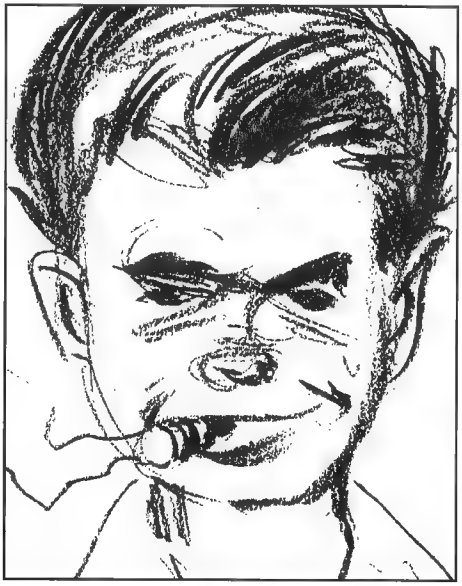
—Will Murray

Kane on Kirby!

TRANSCRIBED BY WILL MURRAY

Jack was the turning point in comics. When Jack came into comics, he represented the best of the old tradition, but he was the vanguard of the new. Everybody's style was predicated on the traditional magazine or book illustration that prevailed during the first part of the century. When Jack came in he had all of those elements under control, but at the same time he introduced a vitality, a force, a sense of power, and a preoccupation with utilitarian shapes. He was a brilliant designer. Nobody could compare. Not Louis Fine. Not Reed Crandall. None of them could compare what Jack was doing on a page. He swept the entire field. He converted it. Within two years, everybody was swiping him.

A year after Captain America, Jack went to DC and did Boy Commandos, the Guardian and the Newsboy Legion, Manhunter, and the Sandman—every one of them a smash hit. He brought a new kind of expressiveness into heroic drawing. Where it tended to be traditional in the styles of Alex Raymond and Harold Foster, he brought in this power, this anger, this emotionalism-that expressiveness that changed the entire course. And he was also the best designer that comics ever had, in terms of creating brand new shapes that suggested futuristic technology. He was so good at it, and so daring, that nobody could follow him without imitating him.



Kirby was just like Beethoven, representing and being the first of the new!

Kirby influenced me because I was brought up, step-by-step by all of the guys who preceded him. Alex Raymond and Hal Foster were two big influences of his.

But there were so many individuals who were good during that time, who drew horses and had a variety of styles that I was nuts about. In fact, I was so nuts about it all that I couldn't focus on a single figure. Finally, I thought it would be Lou Fine because he came closer to my two abstract concerns, which was power and grace.

Louis Fine and Reed Crandall were my chief idols up to the time that Jack came in with Blue Bolt. And that preceded Captain America by about a year. From the time he did Captain America, simply nothing could stand before him. I remember Mac Raboy, who used to do Captain Marvel, Jr. He hired me to assist on Captain Marvel and I said "Who should I follow?" I thought I would follow the artist who influenced Mac Raboy. He said, "No, just follow Jack. Jack is the best in the entire field."

Eventually, Jack fell into disrepute. He was discredited in the '50s because everybody went back to an advertising style of representational drawing. And Jack's expressiveness didn't fit. Even when he created the romance material—he was the guy who did it—they ultimately had more popularity, greater success, by putting on artists who did willowier leaning-into-the-wind, more feminine material, not that strong, extraordinary punch-you-in-the-eye passion of Jack's.

So ultimately it wasn't until the late '50s and the comeback of the superhero, when Jack was beginning to do monster material, that he finally came back. And when he came back he put aside most of the lyricism, and focused almost entirely on power and anger and came through so overwhelmingly, so pervasively, that nothing stood before him. He cleared the decks of Alex Toth and Louis Fine and Reed Crandall and everybody who was there. There was only Jack. That became the only style.

Let me qualify that. There was a parallel influence, but nothing like Kirby's, in Frazetta's work at the same time. But in comic books, since Jack could do five or six pages of pencils a day and Frazetta could do one goddamn page in maybe ten days, there was no comparison.

Jack was simply the greatest cartoonist—no, comic book artist, there's the distinction—that I ever saw. He was gifted, talented, strikingly original, and he was so inventive that he was inexhaustible.

I was his assistant when I was 14 and a half years old on Boy Commandos. The last six months before Simon & Kirby went into the service, they had a contract with DC to get out a certain amount of work. And they wanted to get out as much stuff as possible. So they had me penciling stories that, believe me, were just copied entirely from Jack. They would do an original splash page which they would each pencil and ink, and they would get an inker to go over my stuff and sort of raise it off its knees, and then hand it all in.

Gil Kane self portrait, circa 1984

FACING PAGE
Jack Kirby's self portrait, circa early 1940s, complete with his trademark cigar

I once saw Kirby do ten pages of the Boy Commandos in a day! A ten-page story that he penciled—in those days we worked on a 13 by 18 sheet—and there were eight panels to a page. There were four figures of the Boy Commandos, plus Rip Carter, their leader.

The thing was, it was perfect! It wasn't perfect. It was too good. No matter who inked it except Jack, they took it down. They diminished it. Jack's stuff was just above anybody else's material. When Harvey Kurtzman and I were working for a small two-man agency, Kurtzman's entire inspiration was Jack Kirby. Absolutely. He would swipe him cold—imitate the essence of him so perfectly. And Harvey's stuff was a wonderful, wonderful imitation of Jack's, just catching all of its essence but still being original, with the verve, the spontaneity and, again, that sense of vitality and force that the earlier lyrical guys like Louis Fine didn't have.

So Jack was the first modernist in comics, too. Kirby was just like Beethoven, representing the best of the old, but turning the corner and being the first of the new! And incidentally, the best of the new—never to be exceeded.

the best of the old, but turning the corner

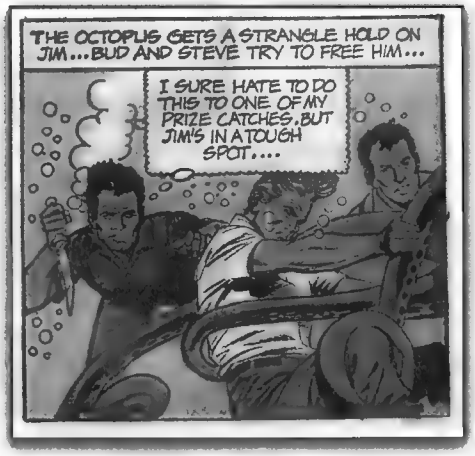
Mark of the Master

Continued from page 25

Gil Kane's phenomenal post-Code repertoire included war and crime titles. At right is a panel from "Fish and Foul Play" in Frogmen #4 (Feb/Apr 1963, Dell). Below, the obscure cover of Big Town #46 (Jun/Jul 1957, DC)

most collectors point to Johnny Thunder as their favorite. Originally done by Alex Toth in *All American* and *All American Western*, Gil put his unmistakable mark on the feature throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. Another feature that had the unmistakable mark of Kane was a recent acquisition from Fawcett Comics, *Hopalong Cassidy,* which he did from 1957-1959. Not only was the western a major publishing genre during the 1950s, but Gil Kane was one of *the* legendary greats of the genre.

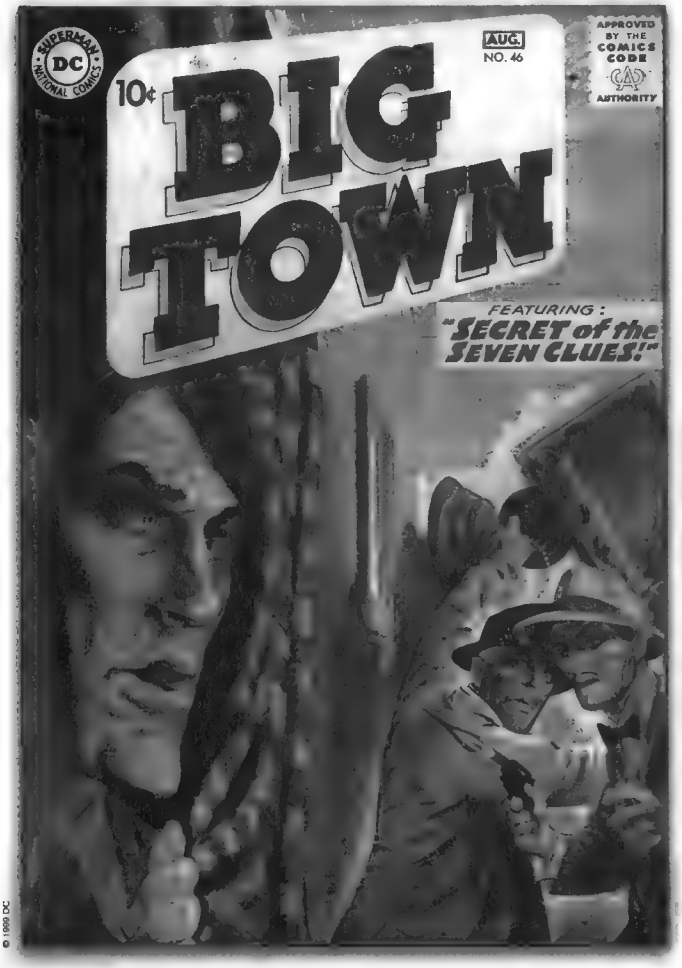
DC's sci fi/fantasy titles also reaped enormous benefits from Kane contributions. Besides fillers in *All Star Comics,* Kane's first sci fi/fantasy stories for DC appeared in *Strange Adventures, Mystery In Space,* and the short-lived *Sensation Mystery.* In those early years (and with these titles having few recurring characters), Gil was free to add his special touch to every story he drew. With *Mystery In Space* #26 (June/July 1955),

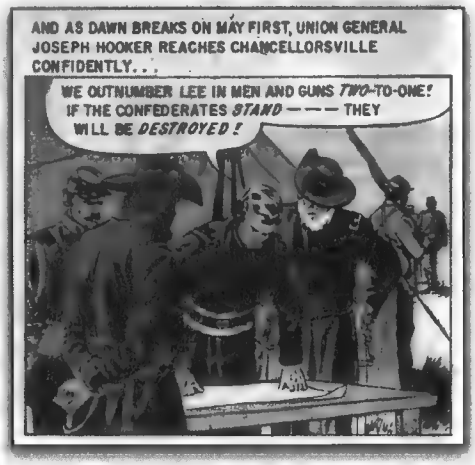

THE OCTOPUS GETS A STRANGLE HOLD ON JIM...BUD AND STEVE TRY TO FREE HIM...
I SURE HATE TO DO THIS TO ONE OF MY PRIZE CATCHES, BUT JIM'S IN A TOUGH SPOT....

Space Cabbie became his first recurring science fiction character... finally Gil had the opportunity to develop a DC sci fi star the way he wanted. Gil drew Space Cabbie through 1958 with Bernard Sachs and Joe Giella providing a majority of the inking chores.

In July 1954, Gil got the opportunity to apply his pencils to one of the DC's best known characters that emerged from the pre-Silver Age era—Captain Comet! Even though Murphy Anderson had given the good Captain the look that would remain with him throughout the 1950s and subsequent resurrections, Gil's approach was clean, new, and breathtaking. Even if Kane's work on *Strange Adventures* and *Mystery In Space* might not have been seen on the inside, Gil provided some of the most beautiful... and collectible... covers the titles would ever see during 1950s (see the *CBM* Color Gallery in this issue).

Gil also did some work on the covers of *Showcase* #17, 18, and 19 which debuted what many feel is DC's best sci fi star... Adam Strange. And strange as it would seem (ahem), Gil not



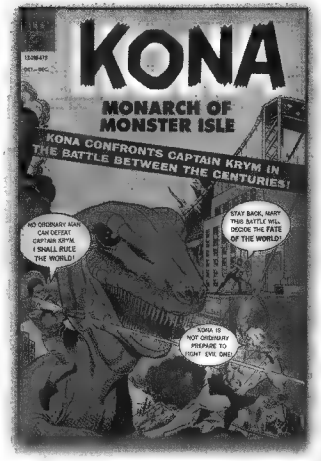

AND AS DAWN BREAKS ON MAY FIRST, UNION GENERAL JOSEPH HOOKER REACHES CHANCELLORSVILLE CONFIDENTLY...
WE OUTNUMBER LEE IN MEN AND GUNS *TWO*-TO-ONE! IF THE CONFEDERATES *STAND* — — — THEY WILL BE *DESTROYED!*

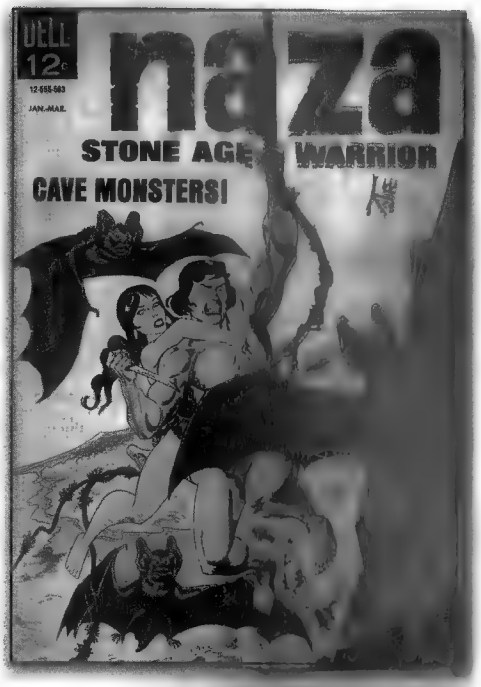
Gil's Civil War art was detailed and historically accurate... as can be seen in the above panel from the Dell Giant Cadet Gray of West Point (Apr 1958)

© 1999 DC

only did the covers for the initial run in *Showcase* but also did the classic early Adam Strange for *Mystery In Space* (the interior art assignment was given to Carmine Infantino, as you'll see in *CBM* #75). It wasn't until many years later that Gil would get the chance to draw Adam again.

Aside from westerns and science fiction, Gil also had a successful run on a lesser known title called *The Adventures of Rex, the Wonder Dog*. Not DC's biggest selling book by any means, Gil had the *Rex* assignment almost from the beginning of the run. Assuming the art chores from Alex Toth after the first issue, for most of the run of the book, the title contained a 10-page and an 8-page Rex story in every issue. Gil inked most of the covers with the majority of the interior inking credits going to Sy Barry and Bernard Sachs. Although not considered a real newsstand success in its day, *Rex* has gathered a collector following over the years and has become one of the most sought-after DC Silver Age titles. (Just look at the *Rex, the Wonder Dog* listing in the latest *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*.)


KONA
MONARCH OF MONSTER ISLE
KONA CONFRONTS CAPTAIN KRYM IN THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE CENTURIES!
NO ORDINARY MAN CAN DEFEAT CAPTAIN KRYM. I SHALL RULE THE WORLD!
STAY BACK, MARY! THIS BATTLE WILL DECIDE THE FATE OF THE WORLD!
KONA IS NOT ORDINARY! PREPARE TO FIGHT EVIL ONE!



Gil's cover for Kona #16 (Oct-Dec 1965) and Naza #5 (Jan/Feb 1965) both from Dell Publishing

Gil Kane Wild Westerns

With his work on westerns spanning 50 years, Gil Kane had the opportunity to draw many of the most popular characters of this genre. Although most came from the DC universe, Gil also drew for many other characters from various companies including television interpretations. The majority of his tenure on western comics went from the 1940s until the beginning of the 1960s. A resurgence in interest in westerns occurred during the '70s and Gil drew a few stories during that time... but he was mainly responsible for providing the new covers for reprint issues. This was the case with many of the Marvel titles and characters that were reprinted during the early and mid 1970s. With Gil's depictions of the Old West, one would think that he had firsthand knowledge of the lifestyle and society of that time. Through the 50-year span of his work, Gil's artistry only got better.

All American Western
Overland Coach 1949-52
All Star Western
Don Caballero 1951-52
Trigger Twins 1952-55
Foley of the Fighting 5th 1952
Johnny Thunder 1955-61
All Star Western
Outlaw (fillers) 1970-71
Four Color
Tales of Wells Fargo 1957-61
Laramie 1960
Gunslinger (cvr only) 1973
Have Gun Will Travel
Paladin 1961-62
Hopalong Cassidy
Hopalong Cassidy 1957-59
Jimmy Wakely
Kit Colby, Girl Sheriff 1950-51
Jimmy Wakely 1951-52
Johnny Thunder (reprint) 1973
Kid Colt (cvr only) 1972-78
Marvel Comics Presents
Two Gun Kid 1992
Mighty Marvel Western
(cvr only) 1972-1976
Monte Hale Western
Monte Hale 1949
Outlaw Kid (cvr only) 1972-1975
Rawhide Kid (cvr only) 1972-1978
Red Wolf (cvr only) 1972-1973
Ringo Kid (cvr only) 1972-1976
Star Spangled War Stories
(Battle Album) 1973
Super DC Giant
Half Breed 1970
Supreme
Wild Bill Hickok 1997
Tomahawk
(reprint) 1972
Two Gun Kid (cvr only) 1972-77
Weird Western Tales (fillers) 1973
Western Comics
Night Hawk 1954-59
Matt Savage 1959-61
Western Gunfighters
(cvr only) 1972-75
Western Kid (cvr only) 1972
Wyatt Earp (cvr only) 1973

Mark of the Master

Unknown to many, Gil also did a certain amount of work on DC's romance titles during the 1950s. These stories appeared in books such as *Girl's Love Stories, Girl's Romances,* and *Secret Hearts*. Although not his first love, these love stories also bear the mark of Kane. Even with all this, Gil somehow found the time to do other DC work, including the cover of *Big Town* and a story for *Mr. District Attorney*.

The end of the 1950s also saw Gil doing work for Dell. During 1957-58, Kane projects at Dell included *Tales of Wells Fargo* in *Four Color* and part of the work on *Cadet Gray of West Point* in the *Dell Giant* series. With all that work and in so many different genres during the 1950s, it's hard to believe that he also was instrumental in the resurrection of the superhero during the Silver Age with his work on Green Lantern. With his work on GL and his widely diverse background, the tone of Gil's 1960's work was set.

Atomized!

With the tremendous success of Green Lantern at the beginning of the 1960s, Gil had established himself as one of the great superhero artists. And although with the '60s came the waning of the western genre, Gil continued to create superb art for science fiction titles and did a certain amount of romance stories. With the decline of the western in 1961, Johnny Thunder vanished along with Hopalong Cassidy, Matt Savage, and Nighthawk. As the resurgence of the superhero exploded, gone were the likes of *Rex, the Wonder Dog*.

To meet the demand for "new" superheroes, Gil combined elements of the Dollman from Quality Comics and DC's Golden Age Atom to create the new "Atom" for the Silver Age. Debuting in *Showcase* #34 (September/October 1961), the Atom quickly

Classic Kane-On-Kane Covers

For the true Kane aficionado, having all the work that Gil has produced since 1949 would be a truly wonderful collection to have... but few can afford it all. In that regard, a good place to start might be to concentrate your collecting efforts on what true Kane-philes affectionately call Kane-on-Kane covers. Nobody does better justice to Kane's cover pencils than when Gil does the inking job himself. (That goes for interior work as well.) To help get you started, here's a list of some of the classic Kane-on-Kane covers from The Atom Age, Silver Age, and Bronze Age.

If, upon reading the list, you happen to find an entry in question or would like to propose additions, your input is welcome! Just let me know via CBM. So without further ado, here's a start for your Kane collecting madness...

Adventures of Rex, the Wonder Dog (DC)
- #20 (Jan/Feb, 1956-57)
- #24 (Dec/Jan 1958-57)
- #26 (Apr/May 1957)
- #27 (Jun/Jul 1957)
- #28 (Aug/Sep 1957)
- #29 (Oct/Nov 1957)
- #30 (Dec/Jan 1957-58)
- #31 (Feb/Mar 1958)
- #32 (Apr/May 1958)
- #33 (Jun/Jul 1958)
- #34 (Aug/Sep 1958)
- #35 (Oct/Nov 1958)
- #36 (Dec/Jan 1958-59)
- #37 (Feb/Mar 1959)
- #38 (Apr/May 1959)
- #39 (Jun/Jul 1959)
- #40 (Aug/Sep 1959)
- #41 (Oct/Nov 1959)
- #42 (Dec/Jan 1959-60)
- #43 (Feb/Mar 1960)

All All Western (DC)
- #106 (Aug/Sep 1960)
- #107 (Oct/Nov 1960-61)
- #108 (Dec/Jan 1961)

All Star Western (DC)
- #58 (Aug/Sep 1951)
- #59 (Oct/Nov 1951)
- #60 (Dec/Jan 1951-52)
- #61 (Feb/Mar 1952)
- #62 (Apr/May 1952)
- #63 (Jun/Jul 1952)
- #64 (Aug/Sep 1952)
- #65 (Oct/Nov 1952)
- #66 (Dec/Jan 1952-53)
- #67 (Feb/Mar 1953)
- #68 (Apr/May 1953)
- #69 (Jun/Jul 1953)
- #70 (Aug/Sep 1953)
- #71 (Oct/Nov 1953)
- #72 (Dec/Jan 1953-54)
- #73 (Feb/Mar 1954)
- #74 (Apr/May 1954)
- #75 (Jun/Jul 1954)
- #76 (Aug/Sep 1954)
- #77 (Oct/Nov 1954)
- #78 (Dec/Jan 1954-55)
- #79 (Feb/Mar 1955)
- #80 (Apr/May 1955)
- #81 (Jun/Jul 1955)
- #82 (Aug/Sep 1955)
- #83 (Oct/Nov 1955)
- #84 (Dec/Jan 1955-56)
- #85 (Feb/Mar 1956)
- #86 (Apr/May 1956)
- #87 (Jun/Jul 1956)
- #88 (Aug/Sep 1956)
- #89 (Oct/Nov 1956)
- #90 (Dec/Jan 1956-57)
- #91 (Feb/Mar 1957)
- #92 (Apr/May 1957)
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- #95 (Oct/Nov 1957)
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- #112 (Aug/Sep 1960)
- #113 (Oct/Nov 1960)
- #114 (Dec/Jan 1960-61)
- #115 (Feb/Mar 1961)
- #116 (Apr/May 1961)
- #117 (Jun/Jul 1961)
- #118 (Aug/Sep 1961)

Amazing Spider-Man (Marvel)
- #96 (May 1971)

Giant Size Spider-Man (Marvel)
- #3 (Jan 1975)

Astonishing Tales (Marvel)
- #14 (Aug 1971)

Atom (DC)
- #30 (Aug/Sep 1965)
- #31 (Oct/Nov 1965)
- #32 (Dec/Jan 1965-66)
- #33 (Feb/Mar 1966)
- #34 (Apr/May 1966)
- #35 (Jun/Jul 1966)
- #36 (Aug/Sep 1966)
- #37 (Oct/Nov 1966)
- #38 (Dec/Jan 1966-67)
- #39 (Feb/Mar 1967)
- #40 (Apr/May 1967)
- #41 (Jun/Jul 1967)

Avengers (Marvel)
- #17 (Nov 1965)
- #35 (Mar 1967)
- #134 (Mar 1975)

Avengers, Giant Size
- #3 (Fall 1975)

Beware the Creeper (DC)
- #2 (May/Jun 1968)

Big Town (DC)
- #37 (Jan/Feb 1954)

Brave & Bold (DC)
- #29 (Apr/May 1960)
- #34 (Feb/Mar 1961)
- #110 (Apr/May 1974)

Captain Action (DC)
- #2 (Dec/Jan 1968-69)
- #4 (Apr/May 1969)
- #5 (Jun/Jul 1969)

Conan the Barbarian (Marvel)
- #23 (Dec 1971)
- #24 (Jan 1972)
- #25 (Feb 1972)
- #26 (Mar 1972)
- #27 (Apr 1972)
- #28 (May 1972)
- #29 (Jun 1972)
- #30 (Jul 1972)
- #31 (Aug 1972)
- #32 (Sep 1972)

Creatures on the Loose (Marvel)
- #16 (Mar 1971)
- #17 (May 1971)
- #18 (Jul 1971)
- #19 (Sep 1971)
- #20 (Nov 1971)
- #21 (Jan 1972)

Fantasy Masterpieces (Marvel)
- #7 (Feb 1967)

Adventures into Fear (Marvel)
- #17 (Apr 1974)

Flash, The (DC)
- #197 (Mar 1970)
- #198 (Jul 1970)

Flash Gordon (King)
- #2 (Nov 1966)

Flash Gordon (Peacock)
- #1 (1967)
- reprints Dell/Gold Key Flash Gordon #2

Green Lantern (DC)
- #45 (Jul 1966)
- #46 (Oct 1966)
- #47 (Dec 1966)
- #48 (Oct 1966)
- #49 (Dec 1966)
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moved to his own title after a short three-issue tryout in *Showcase*, cover dated June/July 1962, Gil breathed life into the Atom's new title which ran for an amazing 37 issues with Kane at the helm. But two superheroes did not a paycheck make which led Gil to mirror the amount of publishers that he worked for during the 1940s. During the 1960s, Gil worked for an incredible eight different publishers… plus started his own company in 1968.

As the 1960s dawned, Gil worked quite a bit with Dell on a number of different titles. Before the demise of Dell's huge TV western stable, Gil did some of the art chores on *Tales of Wells Fargo, Laramie* and *Have Gun, Will Travel*. Gil's other Dell work consisted of mostly movie and television adaptations. *Hennessey,* starring Jackie Cooper, was one of the features repeatedly graced by Gil's pencils. The movie *The Lost World* turned into a full-length book *(Four Color* #1145) with 33 pages of Gil's work. Gil worked on other Dell titles too… including *Brain Boy, Frogman, Kona*, and *Naza* before he moved to other companies and new projects.

Since Gil's page count (read paycheck) was significantly lower than the heyday of the westerns in the 1950s, Gil had to rely on more than just *Green Lantern* and the *Atom*. His next opportunity came with the creation of a new company in 1965…Tower Comics. Gil was responsible for some incredible

Kane alien from Mys. In Space #39 (Aug/Sep 1957). RIGHT: Closeup of Star Hawkins and Ilda the robot from Strange Adv. #173 (Feb 1965)

Obscure Kane Sci-Fi

DC was scrambling to meet the seemingly insatiable appetite for science fiction during the early 1950s… so they began publishing the landmark *Strange Adventures* in 1950 and its companion title, *Mystery In Space,* in 1951. Yet these two anthology titles still weren't enough for the company's enthusiastic science fiction readership, so several long running DC titles began containing science fiction fillers as well. To fill this demand… and, perhaps, as a reflection of editorial orientation as well.

All Star Comics, the long-time home of the JSA began including science fiction (along with mystery and real life) fillers. Before moving to *Sensation Mystery*, Johnny Peril had several adventures in the back of *All Star* too.

Additionally, before changing its lineup, format, and title, *Sensation Comics* contained a new continuing science fiction character—Astra, Girl of the Future. Astra made her first appearance in *Sensation* #99 and ran through the last issue of *Sensation,* #106. With issue #107, the title became *Sensation Mystery.*

All Star Comics suffered the same fate and featured the last JSA adventure in issue #57. Beginning with #58, the title was renamed *All Star Western.* Under the *All Star Comics* banner, Gil Kane produced two filler pieces before the transition. "The Race of the Wheel and the Keel" was a factual piece appearing in *All Star* #53 (and, interestingly, reprinted in the scarce *Showcase* #8). The science fiction story that appeared in *All Star* #56 has yet to be reprinted, but it is a little-seen and excellent example of Gil's early 1950's sci fi work.

Also, several adventures of Astra were penciled by Gil for *Sensation Comics* before it became *Sensation Mystery.* After the change, Gil did four covers and one story for *Sensation Mystery* before the title faded into oblivion.

Two examples of these early Kane classics are…

"The Girl From Aquaterra" *All Star Comics* #56

(Dec/Jan 1950-51)

5 pages, pencils and inks by Gil Kane

Recounting his strange story to Johnny Peril, Philip Talbot told of being sucked into a whirlpool. Discovering that the whirlpool was really a transparent tube, Talbot awakes to find the blonde beauty, Althea, at his side. Althea tells Talbot that he has found his way to Aquaterra, which surface dwellers call Atlantis.

© 1999 DC

Deciding to stay in Aquaterra for a while, Talbot begins the first stage of being "aquatized."

While being shown the sites of Aquaterra, Talbot tells Althea that he is in love with her and wants her to return to the surface with him. After receiving information from the jealous Carmo, the twosome arrives at the surface and Althea is immediately stricken with the inability to breathe. Returning her to the safety of Aquaterra, Talbot discovers that Althea can't breathe real air.

Then, while confronting the jealous suitor Carmo in a struggle, the effects of the "aquatizing" begin to wear off. With Talbot collapsing, Carmo sends Talbot back to the surface in hopes that he will drown in the seas above before a passing ship can rescue him.

As he is sent to the surface, Althea pledges her eternal love for Talbot. The last panel shows Talbot looking over the railing of a ship in hopes that he again will find his love, Althea.

"SOS From Space" *Sensation Comics* #105

(Sep/Oct 1951)

8 pages, pencils by Gil Kane, inker unknown

Exploring a strange, new world, Astra and Professor Rockwell encounter a plant that traps the Professor in its vines. Reacting quickly, Astra fires a ray blast that frees Rockwell. Disturbed that the highest level of life that they have encountered on this new world is plantlife, their conversation is interrupted the Intergalactic distress call coming from their rocket.

Rocketing to find the source of the distress beacon, the duo sees a giant ant attacking a human. As they free the human, the giant ant makes good his escape. Following the ant's trail, Astra and Rockwell come upon a city inhabited by a colony of giant ants.

Captured by the giant ants after they enter the city, they are taken before the leader of the colony who tries to communicate

with them. With communication established, Astra and Rockwell discover that the ants are the highest levels of intelligence on the planet and that the humans are the savages. The anys also tell Astra and Rockwell that hordes of humans from the north are massing for an attack on their city and that that the reason they signaled the distress call.

With the attack beginning, the professor removes the giant electro-repeller from their rocket and quickly adapts it. Creating a force field around the city that will last a thousand years, Astra and Professor Rockwell depart the planet knowing that they helped to save the ant civilization.

Mark of the Master

Tiger Boy panel from "The Boy Who Hates Us All" in Unearthly Spectaculars #2 (Dec 1966, Harvey)

work for Tower. In the title, *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents*, Gil created wonderful renditions of the Raven, Menthor, and NoMan. Of all the work that Gil did for the "smaller" companies of the 1960s, none is better than what he did at Tower. For example, some truly beautiful artwork graced the covers and interiors of *Undersea Agents*, the aquatic version of *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents*. While at the short-lived Tower, Gil racked up five covers and a whopping 115 interior pages.

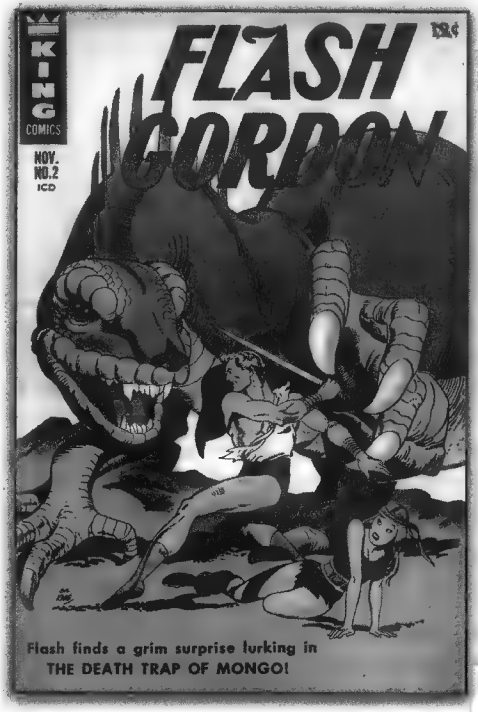
Also during the 1960s, Gil did some work for Harvey on a feature entitled "The Boy Who Hates Us All" starring Tigerboy in *Unearthly Spectaculars* #2 (December 1966). King Comics also published Kane covers related to Gil's work on *The Phantom* #19 and 20. As a result of a strange set of circumstances, Jim Warren's *Creepy* magazine was also able to say they'd published work by Gil.

As the late 1960s approached, Gil's redirected his output, again focusing on the industry's two big guns… Marvel and DC. The only other company to get Kane work during this period was his own. Starting with a new concept, Gil created both Adventure House and *His Name is Savage*. The magazine-like/graphic album-like title would eventually suffer a cruel and unusual demise due to distribution problems. Little did he know that as a result of this venture, future generations of comic book readers would refer to him as one of the earliest pioneers of the American comic book graphic novel.

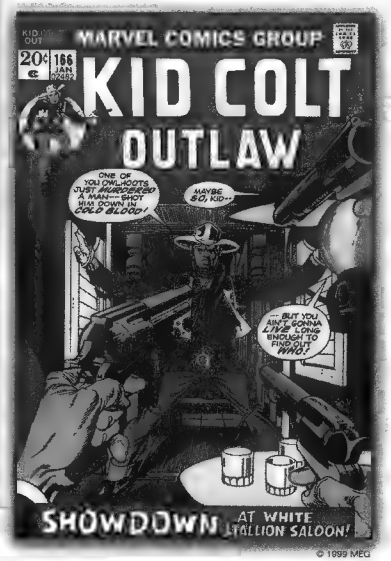
By the end of the 1960s, the Atom's run under Gil's guidance was about to end, Green Lantern would go until the beginning of the '70s, and some occasional science fiction work still appeared in *Strange Adventures* featuring characters such as Star Hawkins and Animal Man. While Gil was beginning some new projects at DC, he was also doing some occasional work for rival company Marvel, in addition to performing his artistic magic at Tower in 1967. At Tower, Gil began to write the scripts for his stories as well as providing the artwork.

Writing was not a new venture for Gil, but one that had not been done since he scripted the story—"Secret of the Stone Panther" which appeared in *The Adventures of Rex, The Wonder Dog* #32 in March 1957. Exactly 10 years later, Gil scripted the Raven story, which appeared in *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* #14 entitled—"Darkly Sees the Prophet." From that point, Gil scripted several stories for *Captain Action, Hawk and Dove*, and *House Of Mystery* for DC… to *Savage Sword of Conan, Marvel Fanfare* and *World's Unknown* for Marvel. This adventure in scripting also led Gil to initiate several other projects during the late '60s and early '70s that combined his artistic and literary talents. By the close of the 1960s, Gil's work could be found in almost every company, character, and genre that supported the comic's medium. The stage was now set for Gil to enter into the 1970s.

One of Kane's great covers done for the King imprint… Flash Gordon #2 (Nov 1966)



Kid Colt Outlaw #166 (Jan 1973) shows Kane's mastery of form and perspective


MARVEL COMICS GROUP
20¢
166
JAN
KID COLT OUTLAW
ONE OF YOU OWLHOOTS JUST MURDERED A MAN—SHOT HIM DOWN IN COLD BLOOD!
MAYBE SO, KID...
BUT YOU AIN'T GONNA LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO FIND OUT WHO!
SHOWDOWN AT WHITE STALLION SALOON!
© 1999 MEG

The 1970s - Artist for DC and Marvel

Throughout the 1970s, Gil's comic work output was split between the 'Big Two,' Marvel and DC. During this time, Gil also had some interesting side ventures into other mediums that supported his talents, but none that matched the success that he was to find with comics. At the beginning of the 1970s, we find Gil in a situation that could almost be considered déjà vu. At DC, he was back drawing westerns similar to his start at the beginning of the 1950s. In the newly resurrected title—*All*

Star Western, he drew the character Outlaw as well as a few filler pieces. For Marvel, his early cover work can be found on the covers of *Mighty Marvel Western, Western Kid, Western Gunfighters* and *Wyatt Earp*. Indeed the westerns had been good to him in the past, but this was not what the '70s held for Gil. In addition to the DC westerns, Gil also had a successful run on *Detective Comics* in which he drew the rotating backup features of Robin and Batgirl. Some of Gil's best work during the early 1970s can be found in both of these features. While doing a successful run on *The Amazing Spider-Man* at the same time as the *Detective* run, Gil moved into the position of house cover artist extraodinaire for Marvel. Gil's pencils graced over 800 different covers for Marvel during the entire decade. Just about every character in the Marvel Universe had its mythos enhanced by Gil's talents being applied. Captain Marvel sported a different costume, Morbius and Iron Fist came into being, and even reprint books received a cover makeover to attract the comic reading public. Be it science fiction, horror, superhero—all genres and characters felt the effect of Gil's work, Even with the multitude of work that Gil was producing for Marvel, DC was able to keep his work in front of the comic reading public with new work and reprints until 1976. During the early and mid '70s, Gil was able to produce wonderful stories for DC such as—"Sword of the Dead" in *Adventure Comics* #425 and "The Face of God" in *House of Mystery* #253.

With all the cover work that was required of him at Marvel and the work that he provided for DC, one could ask—"Is this a man that could have time for anything else?" The answer is a resounding—yes. Even during this period, Gil found time to do stories for *Marvel Team-Up, Marvel Two-In-One, What If?*, and several others. As a matter of fact, Gil even took the time to script the story found in *What If?* #3 entitled "What If The Avengers Had Never Been?" Besides his work in comics, Gil had some "spare" time to do the following: sell his concept of "Blackmark" to Bantam books, ghosted the newspaper strip *Tarzan* from 1979-1981, do a piece for *Time* magazine in 1973, do a piece for *Heavy Metal* in 1979, provide the cover art for John Jake's "Excalibur," and with his partner Ron Goulart—make a triumphant return to the world of newspaper strips with his feature—*Star Hawks* in 1976. Cover artist, interior artist, writer—these are all the hats that Gil wore during the 1970s and he wore them with all the style, dignity and grace befitting a giant in his field.

IF YOU FRENZIED FANS ARE IN THE SPIRIT FOR IT, LET'S TAKE A GHASTLY GLIMPSE AT SOME OF THE DARK DENIZENS OF THE OTHER WORLD IN...
CREEPY'S LOATHSOME LORE!
POLTERGEISTS-- MISCHIEVOUS, SOMETIMES MALIGNANT, SPIRITS WHO EXIST TO TORMENT MANKIND THROUGH MYSTERIOUS MANIFESTATIONS SUCH AS RAPPING ON WALLS, HURLING OBJECTS, AND CAUSING COMMOTIONS. MORE EVIL SPIRITS TURN ON GAS JETS, START FIRES, AND EVEN ATTEMPT TO SMOTHER SLEEPING VICTIMS!
ASTRAL BODIES-- SAID TO BE A SPIRITUAL ESSENCE PRESENT IN ALL HUMAN BODIES, WHICH CAN BE DETACH ITSELF WHOLLY OR PARTLY FROM ITS HOST. OFTEN THEY ARE SENT FORTH ON FRIGHTENING MISSIONS TERMED ASTRAL FLIGHTS. IMPRESSIONS OF THESE FLIGHTS OFTEN RECUR TO THE PHYSICAL BODY AS DREAMS.
GHOSTS-- THE MOST WELL KNOWN, AND FEARFUL, OF ALL SPIRIT BEINGS. A VISIBLE APPARITION OF A FORMER MORTAL, OFTEN RETURNING TO HAUNT AND TORTURE THE LIVING, OFTEN STAYING TO WREAK TERRIBLE VENGEANCE!
ART BY GIL KANE

The inside cover of Creepy #16 (Jun 1967) is just a sample of Gil Kane's artistic contributions to Warren's classic horror magazines

Triumphs in the 1980s

With his triumphant return to DC in the early '80s, Gil produced what he feels is his best work. With a majority of his pencils being consistently inked by himself, he feels that this was the crowning decade of his artistry. Of the 140 covers that Gil drew during the 1980s, 121 were for DC… 15 for Marvel… and 4 done for Fantagraphics. The John Byrne series *Doomsday Squad* and a convention giveaway entitled *Anything Goes,* (including a 4-page update of Kane's *Savage*) were adorned with Kane covers for Fantagraphics. For Marvel, Conan and The Micronauts were the only titles that were to

Mark of the Master

benefit from Gil's pencils during the '80s.

While at DC, the level of Gil's artistry was raised to new heights. I remember seeing the Kane Superman covers as they arrived in my monthly shipment of books from my comic shop. As I came upon each new cover, I remember sitting—just soaking in the beauty of the art be it *Action, Superman, DC Comics Presents, Superman Family,* or *World's Finest*. Even the "family titles" such as *The Daring New Adventures of Supergirl* and *The New Adventures of Superboy* received the "Kane touch." Gil also had the opportunity to work on covers for old and new characters such as Wonder Woman, the fledgling Checkmate, Vigilante, The Fury of Firestorm, The Creature Commandos in *Weird War Tales*, The Legion of Super Heroes both in *Adventure Comics,* and in their own title. Of the new projects that were of his own design, *Tales of the Wilderness Sea* was a 45-page special one-shot issue in 1987 where Gil provided the artwork for Jan Strnad's text. Although never continued, the artwork that was produced was stellar.

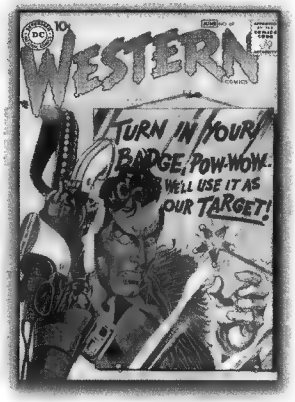
During this period, Gil also had the opportunity to work with two characters that he was familiar with—Green Lantern and The Atom. *The Green Lantern* title and the Atom's new locale in *The Sword of the Atom* made for great reading during this period. I remember asking myself—"Does it get any better than this?" with the response being an undeniable YES. Up until now, all I've been discussing in the '80s is the cover output.

The 1980s also saw a page output for all companies being over 1,664 pages of new artwork that were either used in the context of a story or used as pin-up material. All this was being done in the 1980s while he was either moving from Connecticut to California (in 1984) and working for Ruby Spears creating animation storyboards over a five year period. As an aside, while at Ruby Spears, Gil was responsible for creating storyboards for projects such as Superman, Tarzan, Captain Planet, and Dark Waters. To this day, many of Gil's storyboards can be seen hung in the offices of Ruby Spears and Hanna Barbera. With the '80s drawing to a close and the advent of the '90s, Gil's work also makes some changes. The guiding force for making Gil's transition from the 1980s to the 1990s being DC's *The Ring of the Nibelung*.

Revitalized in the 1990s

After dealing with an extended illness during the last two years of the 1980s, Gil returned to comics with with DC's project *The Ring*. Actually a holdover from the 1980s, the first issue of *The Ring* was cover dated 1989 with the remaining three issues dated 1990. Combined with veteran author Roy Thomas, *The Ring* was a breathtaking departure from the work previously done by Kane.

Although the amount of the art output by Gil has slowed during the 1990s, Kane's SIXTH decade as a comics artist, the quality of that work has never diminished. With the rise of the small independent publishers and the companies that were trying to give the 'Big Two' a run for their money, Gil's work has appeared with six other publishers. Some high points of Gil's work during the '90s resulted from either movie adaptations or original concepts with smaller companies. For Topps, Gil penciled the four-issue mini-series *Jurassic Park* with an additional 16-page premium. While working for Malibu, the team of Kane and Steve Grant produced three of four issues of the title *Edge*. Some of Gil's finest work is found in this series. Hopefully,



Gil's wonderful cover for Western #69 (May/Jun 1958)
© 1999 DC

we can see the final issue in some context. *Monster In My Pocket* was a wonderful series that Gil did for Harvey in the early '90s while also doing the four-issue series *Back To The Future*.

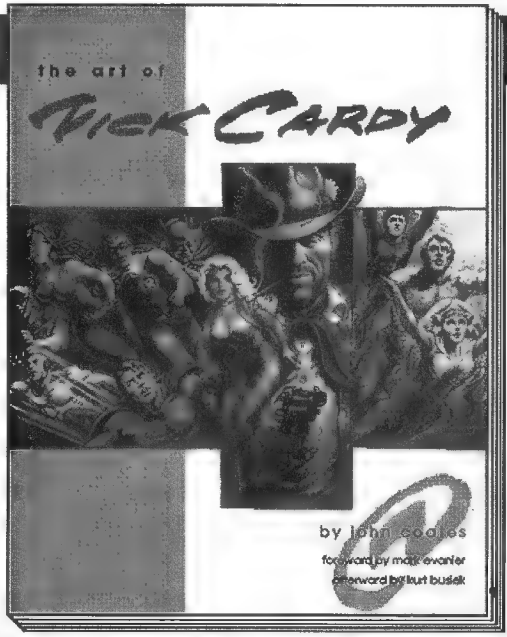
In addition to working for the aforementioned companies, Gil has also done some work for Acclaim, Awesome, and Image. Gil's greatest compliment as an artist came from Alan Moore and Awesome comics recently when he himself was cast as a major character in the title *Judgment Day: Aftermath*. Gil is still actively producing art for the various publishers, but the majority of his work remains with DC.

Aside from his art duties for comics publishers, Gil is reproducing covers for commission and for auction. A great deal of his past original artwork can be found on the Internet for purchase from various dealers, as well as via convention sales and trade magazines. One other project that Gil has been actively involved with for the past two years is the creation of an index of all his work since his first days in the business. I am honored to have worked with Gil on this indexing project and, as a result of our talks regarding the index, I have developed a tremendous appreciation not just for Gil Kane the artist, but also for Gil Kane, the man. With his wealth of comics' historical knowledge, coupled with an unerring ability to identify past artists and inkers, Gil is a gentleman who has become a walking encyclopedia of comicdom. Always willing to talk about the field in general and his involvement with individuals, companies and characters, I have found Gil's conversations enlightening and captivating. So it's about time that this icon of the comics world is recognized for his contributions to the field, and I'm glad that I have been able to participate in some small way. With the 1990s coming to a close and the new millennium fast approaching, I feel sure that Gil will be producing the same high quality of artwork well into the future. We are now living in a world filled with Kane artistic concepts turned to reality.

In closing, I feel inspired to say . . . "Gil, for all the art and friendship that you have provided to us… thank you!"

Panel from page 28 of Kane's movie adaptation "The Lost World" (Four Color #1145, Sep 1960, Dell)

A LAKE OF BOILING LAVA! THE NATIVES HAVE DAMNED IT UP--BUT THE DAM CAN BE BROKEN BY THAT LOG!
YES, CHALLENGER, BUT WHY SHOULD THE NATIVES WISH TO BREAK THEIR OWN DAM?



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Conversation with Gil Kane

Kane: Well, the conception of the comic book is 60 years old and, by and large, it hasn't changed. They're still turning out the same sort of material they started with, and the only thing that's changed is that each generation adapts to comics using the language, the mood of the times. For instance, the kind of force and brutality of today's comics, whether it's horror or superhero, is quite distanced from the kind of Elysian material that was done during the 1930s and '40s.

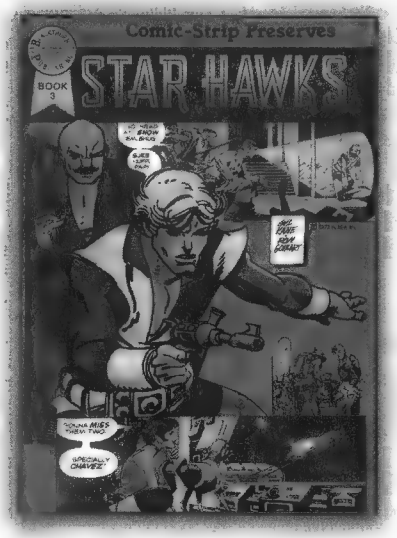
Back then we had a certain amount of optimism and idealism. Now, the country and the world are very, very skeptical and there's a bottom line philosophy about everything. So today's comics work is often *harsh*; it's not the sort of idealistic work of the past, which seemed to suit young readers better and drew them to more and more of our material.

Star Hawks Book 3 (Oct 1986) contains reprints of Kane's legendary newspaper strip, Star Hawks. The effort was an interesting experiment... an entire comic book page broken up by irregular panels that gave the most space to the pictures that required it... something you can't typically do in a daily strip

During the early days of comics, you could find interesting stories transferred to the comics ... about flyers like Lindbergh in *Scorchy Smith,* and *Terry and the Pirates* in China, and stories of adventure in *Flash Gordon, Tarzan,* and *Prince Valiant*. You could find strips about sports, about married couples... you had a nice range of choice. Now, interests seem to have narrowed.

McKinnon: *Do you think today's comics have lost a sense of humanity?*

Kane: They certainly have. I like stories where there's a sense of loss, or a sense of possible gain. Essentially, now you have pages and pages of nothing but fighting. Of course, I used to be the biggest advocate of a certain amount of action, because there was a time when there wasn't any action. After the Kefauver Senate sub-committee cracked down and the Comics Code was created, there was *absolutely* no action!



In westerns, the most you could do was to shoot a gun out of a villain's hand in the last panel; there weren't any slugfests or chases on horseback... in other words, the kind of things that move a story across a page! But here in the late '90s, they'll take a social problem and thin it down to a point where it's just a background for guys knocking each other's brains out. It used to be that individual qualities about the material attracted readers to their favorite magazines. Now, most of the magazines essentially have a *single* quality and it's hard to differentiate among them. The material is well presented, but I don't see how it's possible for readers to stay engaged.

Today, corporations are turning out comics and you can sense it. As a result, the material is utilitarian, because the first thing companies do is to subordinate individualism... it's too hard for them to deal with. If they would allow creators to evolve and develop, the material would reflect distinctive, interesting, and unmistakable personalities. The kind that readers can remember. Instead, little by little the entire field of comic strips has been homogenized.

Occasionally, some strips like *Calvin and Hobbes* rise above, because the force of personality is so significant. Watterson was brilliant and inventive and creative. The deeper he got into the material, the richer it seemed. This doesn't happen to everyone, of course. But in comics, they only look for something they can hang an entire line of books on, and the superhero was the last thing to come along and revitalize the field, and they have not been able to replace it.

McKinnon: *Speaking of newspaper strips, what about* Star Hawks?

Kane: That was an interesting *two tier* strip, where they wanted me to do a couple of three-panel strips, one on top of another. I suggested, instead, that we do a comic book page... break up the panels irregularly to give the most space to the pictures that required it... and do the things you typically can't do in a daily strip. So we went with that and had some good years, particularly the first two. Unfortunately, newspapers resist comic strips... they hate giving up the space! Eventually, *Star Hawks* was cut down to a regular comic panel and eventually dropped. It started in 1977 and ran about five years.

McKinnon: *Were you doing any comics at that time?*

Kane: I was doing seven pages of penciling and inking every week just for *Star Hawks*. Then I took on the Sunday page of *Tarzan*, and that was the equivalent of two or three more comic book pages. Eventually, I was penciling and inking ten pages a week. When *Star Hawks* was cut back, I was making less money, so I started doing comic book work again to generate more income.

McKinnon: *I recently saw the excellent* Lone Ranger *strip that you drew...*

Kane: I was asked to try out for a *Lone Ranger* strip, and it worked out and I got it. But, unfortunately, it took me about four and a half days a week to do the dailies and Sunday, and I couldn't make enough money. I did three weeks of *Lone Ranger* and I saw I wasn't making enough income, so I had to give it up. I called Russ Heath and he took it over. I did some nice work on that strip, and I was crazy about the western material, but I had to let it go. I still have some of the breakdowns, and they're pretty comprehensive.

McKinnon: *Gil, do you draw every day?*

Kane: I don't draw every day, but I *look* every day. Every day I sit down as though I were looking at some bible, and I pore

over the work of an illustrator, or a painter, or a cartoonist, but it has to be somebody whose work is of *abiding interest* to me, and I look at it for *hours*. I do that every single day. It's the thing that I spend the most time on.

The work that I look at fills me with information and also enormous admiration for the really skilled, insightful, and brilliant artists. I also look at sculpture. I have a number of books on Greek sculpture and other types of sculpture up through the Renaissance and into the 19th century when they were still doing neo-classical forms. A lot of it is unbelievable! I like power and grace, and sculptures are lyrical monuments to power and grace!

Power and grace … those are the sorts of feelings that I prefer in art. So these days I feel like I know more now than I ever knew, and so I want to do epic material.

McKinnon: *As far as present work, would you discuss the cover re-creations that you've been doing. Do you get excited about doing art like that?*

Kane: Yes, as a matter of fact, I do! I have to re-think all the covers because I never do a cover as it was originally drawn; I try to keep exactly the same elements and configuration, but have completely different figures, and so on and so forth.

I previously completed an Atom cover—*Showcase* #34—and it looks like that original cover except that it is a thousand times improved! When you look at it, you know what it is, yet it's brand new. For example, on the piece I'm doing for you, a re-creation of the cover of *Green Lantern* #8, it took me a long time to work out the Gila monster. I kept rejecting what I did: I would have a lizard that was too lizard-like and not Gila monster enough, and it took me about eight or nine tries to finally get the cover I wanted.

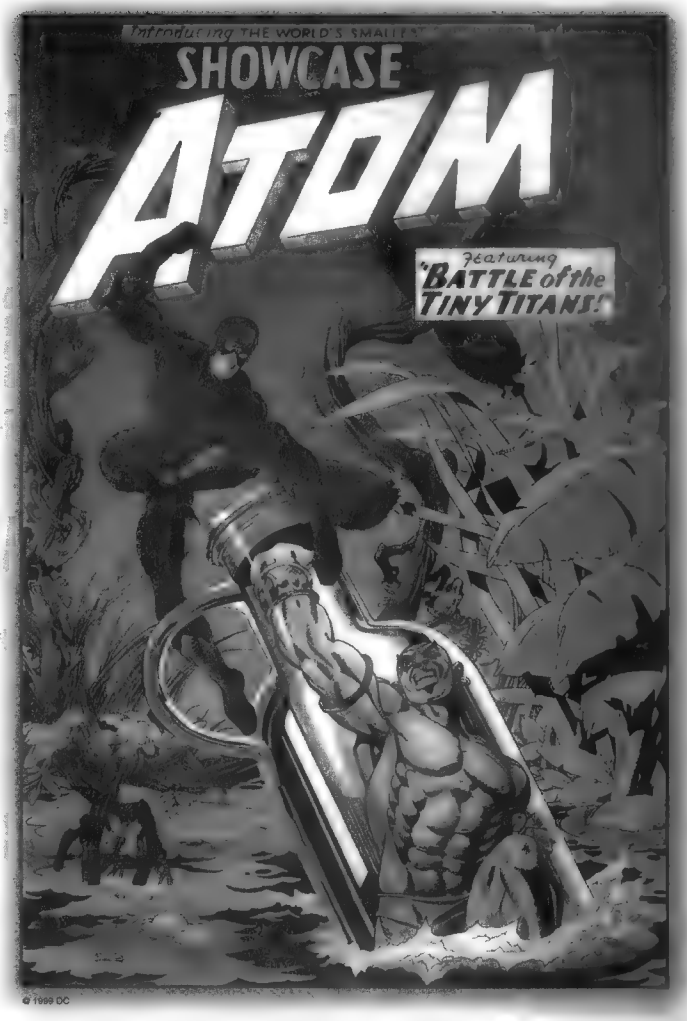
McKinnon: *Do you do breakdowns and ink directly as you would a comic page, making changes as you go?*

Kane: No, I work it as an illustration; I do all my planning on a very large board, twenty by thirty inches, and I keep rejecting what doesn't work. By the time I'm ready for inking and color, the composition is set. Regarding the Green Lantern cover that I'm doing for you, it's got real good composition and action is terrific, and yet it looks just like the old cover. I hated the old composition on the original comic cover, which I penciled and then took a smudge pencil and smudged. Then they did the regular comic book coloring, so when it was reproduced, it looked something like a dirty painting.

McKinnon: *Those 'gray tone' covers are quite popular with collectors these days.*

Kane: Yes, but this re-creation is so much richer and the figures are better.

McKinnon: *Moving along to a further discussion of people associated with comics, I once read that you felt that the comics field has attracted a number of very strange people.*



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The original cover to Showcase #34 is often referred to in the fan press as "the most beautiful cover of DC's Silver Age!" Gil Kane's cover re-creation of Showcase #34 (shown above) looks similar to the original design… yet contains new artistic elements created by Kane especially for the work

Kane: It's not a business that attracts normal *nine to five* guys. It's a business that attracts people that have urgency, a need to express themselves through the medium. A lot of the guys in the field are real paranoids, and all their lives they've imagined conspiracies! I'm not kidding! I've had tremendous arguments with some of these guys. But I tell you, the wackier the guys are, the better they are.

A lot of comic artists are angry or frustrated. Their heightened emotions give them sort of a well to dip into that never dries up. There's a quality of invention that's always available to them, being fed by their anger. That's an excellent description of Jack Kirby.

McKinnon: *Who else fits into that category of artist?*

Kane: Steve Ditko, who was a disciple of the writings of Ayn Rand. I don't think anybody ever got anywhere talking with Ditko… he would never raise his voice, only smile… but there

Conversation with Gil Kane

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Kane's re-creation of the cover of Green Lantern #8 (originally published Sep/Oct 1961) featuring "The Challenge from 5700 A.D.!" ...the famous Gila monster cover. Note the absence of the original word balloon to focus the eye solely on design

was no dealing with his point of view. One couldn't adjust it or influence it or shift it in any way. You could only come to terms with Ditko's viewpoints.

McKinnon: *Speaking of the classic Silver Age artists, you did some work for Marvel around 1966. I believe it was a few stories featuring The Hulk in* Tales to Astonish *and Captain America in* Tales of Suspense. *Did you ink both the covers and the stories?*

Kane: Yes. At that point I was making the transition from the DC house style, because Stan felt that my stuff looked like it was drawn by David Niven (*laughter*). The figures didn't look as masculine as Jack's. But ultimately I caught on and I used those stories to make the transition. I worked especially hard on the Captain America to have it retain some of Jack's qualities.

Up at DC, prior to my going to Marvel, they liked a figure that was very slim; it was the house style. And when Jack came along, he galvanized the field so that you needed a more aggressive, angular figure, and, ultimately, I managed to assimilate that style.

McKinnon: *Yet you didn't continue working for Marvel immediately after completing those stories...*

Kane: Stan let me go after I did about a half dozen jobs there because he said I was making the Hulk too handsome looking... they put Marie Severin on it. But they did hire me back shortly thereafter to do Spider-Man.

McKinnon: *What's your take on Marvel's rise in the '60s?*

Kane: The superhero made a comeback, but not so much because of DC. I mean, DC *did* start the ball rolling with the updated superheroes like Flash and Green Lantern, but they weren't getting phenomenal sales; they were just getting very good sales. So it was Stan and Jack's irreverent material that began to revitalize the entire comics scene. Stan, especially, took DC's old notions (which were out of step with the cultural climate of the '60s) and brought it up-to-date by being irreverent, in a sort of mock way. The new way interested young people and gave comics a whole new energy. Stan and Jack updated the way material was written... it became freer.

McKinnon: *The perspective that you've gained in six decades in the field means a lot to fans. Are you content with what you've accomplished in your career?*

Kane: I think that I've never reached my full potential. Even though I worked very hard, I could have been more serious about the work. When I do a page, the toughest part is the breakdown... the figure action... the composition. At the point after I've completed the pencils, I should draw the heck out of it, but then I become anxious to go on to the next thing.

It isn't as much a lack of patience as it is one of economics. Getting paid decently in comics requires doing a large volume of work. For example, at Marvel I was sometimes doing close to two dozen covers a week! So, ultimately, I depended on layout and a certain grasp of the figure in order to do my stuff well. But at the same time, I never carried it through to a complete conclusion... I never drew the heck out of it!

For instance, I never developed a black style... all I ever did was spot blacks here and there, but I never used a serious light source. When inking, I never went for mood to show night, day, whatever. What I was really doing was tracing my own pencils. I would tighten them up and pull them together, but in effect, I still didn't often carry them forward and do complete stuff.

When you do complete stuff, you take the material forward from that point and you finish a picture the best way you can. I should have worked slower and more thoughtfully, but it's been a living.

One thing that many of the guys have nowadays is a capacity for completely finishing the material. It's not that the inkers

are great, it's simply that first, the pencilers do very complete pencils with the blacks in them. Second, the inkers are very careful with their line work.

McKinnon: *What are your feelings regarding inkers 'finishing' the work that you've penciled?*

Kane: I think inking is sort of an artificial thing; it's something the penciler should be doing, refining his own drawings instead of exposing them to another's interpretation. You can see the difference between various inkers on Jack Kirby, and you can see how the work can be interpreted a million different ways. I always felt it was best when Jack did his own inking.

Kirby inked many of the early Captain America splashes for Timely and he inked a strip he did called *The Vision* in the back of the book. He was a *terrific* inker. He finished his own work with a quality that not even Joe Simon, or any of the other guys, could achieve.

McKinnon: *Do you feel that inkers who worked on Jack's material became better artists as a result?*

Kane: There's no question. Practically every inker I know who worked over a good penciler became vastly improved; they came away with little ways of doing things better, and an understanding of how a talented penciler's mind works.

McKinnon: *Do have a favorite inker for your own work?*

Kane: I liked a couple of guys for a while. I liked Dan Adkins on the first couple of issues I did of *Captain Marvel*, #17 and 18, and I thought he carried them off very, very well. I also love Kevin Nowlan's inking on my more recent work. But I must say, now that I am older and wiser, that I think I can carry my work forward in a way that I've never been able to do before!

McKinnon: *Please discuss Jack Kirby a bit more. How would you assess Jack Kirby's influence on the comics field?*

Kane: When it came to the superhero, Jack developed the definitive approach, one that, with variations, is still being used today. Eisner obviously had an influence on the field in the early days, so I would say that, primarily, Jack and Eisner seem to be the founding fathers of this field. And all of the artists who've come subsequently have had a sort of superficial, stylized impact. This will continue until they step away from superheroes into another kind of story line. For instance, if they were suddenly doing romance, Jack's stuff would not be appropriate and a whole new style would have to be refined and developed into something that supports romance, with a kind of lyrical quality….

Did you notice that all of Jack's romance stuff looked like some sort of backwoods romance? It was so raw … it lacked any sort of lyrical refinement. That's one of the reasons the romance books started to fail after the DC books came out. Alex Toth developed a romance style that was full of roses; it almost looked like a Hallmark card! That was the correct approach.

Jack's romance stuff was too burly, too thuggish, with a brutal quality. While there's no denying that Jack and Joe Simon developed the basic concept of romance books, once the newness wore off, I felt their style seemed very heavy-handed. Kirby romance always included a mountain cabin or something. His stuff felt *lurid* to me, that's the word!

McKinnon: *Even if you feel that you've never achieved your full potential, it seems that your art has progressed well over the years. To my eye, your art seems to have gotten better and better.*

Kane: Thanks… I always felt a need to upgrade my stuff. While I was competitive, the fact is that I always had the need to work and *refine*. I felt there was so much that I wasn't getting or didn't do well enough. So I kept trying.

Meanwhile, a lot of the guys that I knew became complacent. I assume that they got bored with the essentials of the job. I *used* to rely on the superficial aspects of the work, but then I got into the idea of structure and design and building an entire piece: learning how to divide space, both physically and emotionally. Once those things came into the picture, it became *absorbing* for me! I had never known that before.

When I was a kid starting out, all I ever thought about was just trying to do action figures like Kirby or somebody else, but the fact is that my grasp was superficial; I didn't *know* anything. So when I finally understood what each thing represented and started putting it all together, then it became my life's work. I started questioning everything, and developed in the process.

Even now, when the material has very little that I am sympathetic towards, my more mature approach to the abstractions of picture creation find dramatic, emotional, balanced, and harmonious new meaning. So both the work and the final products have become much more compelling.

And I find that those same rules apply to anything creative, whether it's drawing or writing or music or anything artistic… once you engage the whole process of composition, then everything is far better.

McKinnon: *Why do you admire Alex Toth so much?*

Kane: It took me and most of the guys I know years to start working out interesting pictures and designs and so forth; we didn't have many people to rely on to solve our problems. And we weren't smart enough to go to the magazine illustrators,

Kane went all-out to get the attention of young readers at the close of the Silver Age. The cover of Captain Marvel #18 (Jan 1969), with its large figures and dynamic composition, is an excellent example of his efforts at Marvel during this era

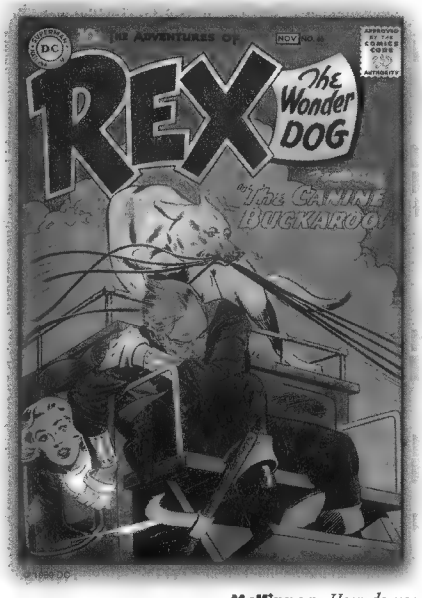
who were superior. We went to comic book people who didn't know *anything!* The people who preceded us weren't much in the way of artists. There were only a couple who had things on the ball and most of them didn't have enough. They might have been good figure people but they couldn't compose, they couldn't dramatize … none of those things. So we (Alex and I and others) had to learn for ourselves, and as we learned, we solved problems for everybody who came after us, including today's artists!

McKinnon: *You forged a unique style and there's a look to your work that identifies 'Kane' art. But a lot of new guys don't have an instantly identifiable look…*

Kane: I didn't know that I had that uniqueness for the longest time; it was only after John Romita told me that I had a distinctive style. Until then, I thought that I was style-less.

McKinnon: *I look at your 1950's covers for* Rex the Wonder Dog *and they just jump out as being 'Kane.' Who inspired you then?*

Kane: That was about that time that I began looking for answers. Stupidly, all of my idols were in the field, and it was only when I became more serious that I looked outside the field for guidance and inspiration. My idols became a combination. Within the comics field, the first person I looked to was Roy Crane on *Wash Tubbs* and *Buzz Sawyer*; he taught me the very basics of composition. Then, I started turning to the art instructor, George Bridgman, and taking life classes, buying books on anatomy and nudes, collecting anything that looked like it would give me information; I didn't care *where* it came from. So Roy Crane, J.C. Leyendecker, Norman Rockwell, Lou Fine, Mort Meskin all became an inspiration to me…



The Adventures of Rex, The Wonder Dog #46 (Jun/Jul 1959) is just one example of the many excellent Gil Kane covers that adorned this now-extinct, and highly collectible, DC title

McKinnon: *How do you feel about Meskin and Fine?*

Kane: Oh, I love Meskin. He was heavily influenced by an artist that I admire named Ed Cartier, who used to do pulp illustrations for *The Shadow*.

As for Louis Fine, I watched Louis' development from nothing; little by little, over the course of two years, his art evolved into an amazing, sophisticated style. Louis' best work had a great nobility and a natural grace that just *staggered* me. I thought Fine was the first truly original artist in comic books, with a style all his own. Lou Fine influenced all of comics until Jack Kirby and Reed Crandall came in.

McKinnon: *Did your colleagues feel as intensely as you did about such artists?*

Kane: Most of the guys felt as intensely about Fine as I did, including Carmine Infantino (who was a partner of mine for a while) and Joe Kubert, who was a close friend. I started with Joe, too.

McKinnon: *What do you think of Kubert's work?*

Kane: Oh, I think he has more natural ability than I have. But think I'm a better penciler than he is and I think I know more about making a picture than he does. But at the same time, he has great natural facility, much stronger than mine. And I had to refine my craft, whereas Kubert came with great natural gifts. I don't think he's worked up to the possibilities inherent in his natural gifts. I never thought his work was as intelligent as it could be. Kubert was always natural and instinctive, and that was also true of Carmine. So when it came time to broaden their scope, Joe Kubert was able to do it with natural facility.

McKinnon: *Discussing the good old days, what period or project do you look back on with real satisfaction?*

Kane: I like my Superman in *Action Comics* and my *Sword of the Atom* period. I also liked the western covers that I managed to both pencil and ink for Marvel. Those were very satisfying to me and I still regard them as some of my best work, even though nobody ever bought those reprint issues! (*laughter*) I believe I did over 150 western covers for Marvel. I was drawing like a son-of-a-gun at that time! I devised what looked like a Ninja test for myself every morning!

McKinnon: *A Ninja test?*

Kane: Oh yeah! I used to do body parts, and I'd spend a whole period just doing heads. I'd tip them forward and tip them backward, I would do them in perspective, upside down… I *never* had figures flat, always in perspective, which were harder to do. I'd do 'ass shots' where figures are bent over, just because it was more difficult. During that period, I was self-assured. I just loved that stuff. And it was all so easy! I think I know more these days, but I'm just an old man now …

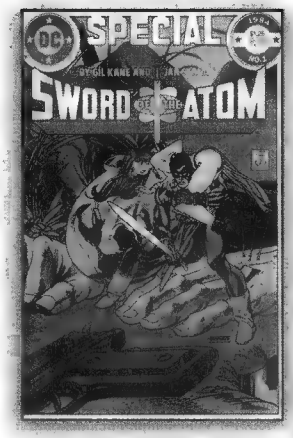
McKinnon: *I'm going to go down a list of some of your contemporaries, and I'd like you to tell me what comes to mind. How about Joe Giella?*

Kane: Well, Giella was a hard worker and a very, very nice guy, but I never felt I was at my best with his inks. I preferred Murphy Anderson and beyond Murphy, I preferred Sid Greene when he finally got to it. I felt Greene was the most consistent and best inker of my DC material. I actually like Wally Wood on my work, but he was only a sometime-inker.

McKinnon: *Can you elaborate about Murphy Anderson?*

Kane: Murphy is an absolutely first-rate guy. I think his work is *very* stylized and his style is extremely strong, so he tends to usurp some of the material when he inks. Whether he penciled his own stuff, or he inked someone else's stuff, it still looked like his! (*laugher*)

Murphy was excellent on Infantino and he was good on me, except that I don't think he saw design the way I did. Seymour Barry wasn't bad, either, but he left early on to do The Phantom.



McKinnon: *What about Mike Sekowsky?*

Kane: Sekowsky had verve to his pencil stroke that was terrific. He had design sense, a sense of shape. On things where a great deal of movement wasn't involved, I thought he was *very* forceful. But when it came to doing westerns, he couldn't draw horses, and somehow there was a two-dimensional quality to that stuff… a very, very crisp, beautifully designed two-dimensional quality, but two-dimensional nonetheless. And I didn't think Sekowsky's figures worked well in movement. But, again, he had a terrific design sense.

The thing is, every one of those guys who worked professionally had some kind of strength or they wouldn't have made it as professionals.

McKinnon: *What about Wayne Boring?*

Kane: Well, he started out working for Joe Shuster, who, by degrees, began to lose the Roy Crane qualities in the drawing—you know Superman is really Captain Easy.

And while we're discussing it, Captain Easy is Tom Mix. As a matter of fact, Prince Valiant is Captain Easy *and* Tom Mix. Caniff once used the character as a figure named Snake Tumblin in *Terry and the Pirates*. It's a classic head devised by Crane.

So, Shuster was a dedicated Roy Crane fan, but as more pressures were placed on him, Shuster probably stopped inking Superman, and eventually Shuster disappeared and Boring's version became the most consistent interpretation of Superman. In fact, he was specifically hired by DC to become their chief Superman artist, and was for 15 or 20 years after that. Wayne Boring ended up as a bank guard in Florida, because even with Superman he couldn't get enough work to sustain himself. Sadly, it's the nature of the business.

McKinnon: *Did you enjoy working with Roy Thomas?*

Kane: Oh, yes. He was one of the best collaborators I ever had. Mostly, we worked to my strengths. We did the stories I wanted to do, and usually I did most of the plotting, or at least I would have the basic idea for the story. So that way, it was very easy working with him. We would work out an outline, I would pencil the entire job, and then he'd drop the copy in. We worked almost effortlessly.

Working with Roy wasn't the richest collaboration I ever had, but I would say it was the easiest and most enjoyable. When we worked together at Marvel, it was very nice because Stan, who was the only boss, was… too busy to stick his nose into things… and he'd let us do everything ourselves. The situation supported collaboration. There was a flexibility that's missing today.

Gil's cover for Sword of the Atom Special #1, (1984)

The background of the cover of The Ring of the Nibelung Book Four: The Twilight of the Gods (1990, DC) shows off Gil's incredible talent for detail and collage

McKinnon: *Around 1984, you essentially left comics to go into the field of animation…*

Kane: The studio I worked for was Ruby Spears, which is a subsidiary of Hanna-Barbera. I worked on presentation boards. When I went up to the Ruby Spears office a few years ago, they had about 25 or 30 paintings on the wall… big paintings… and I would say about 95% of them were mine.

McKinnon: *When you did these boards, did you ink and paint them?*

Kane: I inked some, but I didn't paint them. They would describe the characters to me, and I would create boards.

McKinnon: *When did you develop your distinctive 'Kane' logo?*

Kane: I was looking for some sort of signature for myself, and I developed it during my creation of Blackmark, around 1970.

McKinnon: *Before we close, I want to say that there are many gifted artists, and there's no question you are among them. But beyond that, you have a gift for exploring your talents, which is very special; you've never squandered your artistic gifts. Thank you for enriching our enjoyment of comics.*

Kane: And thank *you* very much, my boy!

THE MICHAEL NAIMAN REPORT

All You Need is Love!

Greg Manning's September auction of comic books certainly had some vigorous bidding and notable sales. In fact, by the way the Romance books sold, you'd think that someone sprayed an aphrodisiac into the phone lines! Love was in the air and everyone was willing to pay for it! Looks as if many of these books will titillate the marketplace enough to generate stiff competition from many collectors to obtain the #1 issues. The prices are certainly "reasonable" in the Guide. Collectors will note that many of these books are still very affordable... even in Near Mint condition! Photo covers will probably lead the way in demand. Dealers will no doubt want to look in their back issue boxes for these American Beauties!

Some of the Manning sales include: Cowgirl Romances #28 (#1) VF (file) $196 (1.27X); Cupid #1 VF (file) $115 (1.93X); First Romance #1 VF (file) $115 (1.83X); Love Lessons #1 VF+ (file) $115 (2.05X); Love Memories #1 VF+ (file) $115 (2.05X); Love Mystery #1 VF+ (file) $196 (2.07X); Lovelorn #1 VF (file) $173 (2.75X); Lovers Lane #1 VF $253 (6.1X); My Love Story #1 VF (file) $219 (3.68X); My Secret #1 VF+ (file) $115 (2.05X); Rangeland Love #1 VF+ (file) $219 (3.13X), Romances of the West #1 VF (file) $219 (2.16X); Romantic Confessions #1 VF+ (file) $173 (2.74X); Romantic Western #1 VF $173 (1.83X); Sweethearts #1 NM $518 (5.45X); Sweetheart Diary #1 VF- $115 (1.73X).

Before going on to other observations, it's been nearly 2¼ years since the Great Flood of '97 literally wiped out Grand Forks, North Dakota and the only comic book store within hundreds of miles. Long-time retailer/collector/good-guy and Grand Forks resident Barry Branvold will be re-opening his comic shoppe at the beginning of November! Best wishes, Barry!

Most of my friends and readers of CBM know that I am a dyed in the wool... er... feathers... Duck fan. For years I have observed that the majority of Duck collectors will typically NOT spend big bucks for their books. They're collectors of stories and art, not condition aficionados Like Uncle Scrooge, they are careful with the dollar.

I might now have to modify that opinion!

I have pointed out in the past how rare the Whitman issue of Uncle Scrooge #179 (July 1980) has become. For Scrooge completists it is, hands down, the most difficult book to locate. Issue #179 may have just set a modern day record. On Friday, October 8th, 1999, Doug Sulipa of Comicworld in Canada, set a new record sales price for this issue via an eBay auction... $510! That's 37.77X Guide. Wow!

I have heard from overseas regarding this issue. Long-time Duck collector Ole Reichstein Nielsen of Denmark observes, "The problem with ol' #179 is that it's not possible to set a guide price by the usual rules. There simply are so few copies of the book and they so rarely change hands that every trade is a statistic of its own."

Now that this lofty plateau has been reached, don't be surprised when you see a few more of these issues make an appearance in the marketplace. There is an insatiable appetite for this book among Scrooge completists, and it looks as if they're willing step up to the plate and pay for it!

Speaking of record sales... how about the Zap #1 from the Greg Manning auction selling for $3,738? Or for that matter the recently realized $2,755!! I realize that these underground comic books aren't listed in the Price Guide, but, how can you ignore this sale?? What is the true value of this first edition book in Good, Fine, and Near Mint? While the story behind this comic has been somewhat caught up in the mythology of the 1960s, we are still fortunate that the people responsible for

(Continued on page 73)

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The comic book market remains healthy for Golden Age and Atom Age book collecting. Here are some sample sales... Adventures into Darkness #11 VG/FN minor color touch $35, #12 VG $45; Adventures into Weird Worlds #23 FN $50; Aggie Mack #6 FN/VF $63, #7 VG+ $27; All-American #93 GD $69; Amazing Detective #13 FN- $125; Authentic Police Cases #10 VG $40; Babe, Darling of the Hills #1 VG- $75, #2 GD/VG $35, #3 FN $70, #4 FN/VF $125; Beware Terror Tales #5 VG+ $60; Black Hood #15 GD+ $37; Catman #9 VG/FN $275, #22 VG- $100; Chamber of Chills #23 (#3) FN $88; Daredevil (Marvel) #16 VF+ $70; Dollman #38 FN $80; Dynamic #20 GD+ $80.

Fantastic Fears #6 FA/GD $45; Fight #30 F- $95, #44 FVF $135; Green Hornet #8 GD $95; Haunted Thrills #7 VG+ $50, #9 FN/VF $140; Jackpot #7 GD- $75, #8 VG- $175; Jo-Jo #17 VG $135; Journey Into Mystery #50 GD/VG $26; Love and Marriage #16 FN/VF $33; Marvel Mystery #85 GD+ $100; Men's Adventures #24 VG+ $60; Murder Inc. #3 VG+ $50; My Life #4 GD+ $75, #9 GD/VG $32; Mysterious Adventures #18 FN+ $150.

Punch #22 VG- $40; Rangers #14 GD+ $135, #24 VG+ $75, #25 VG/FN $85; Rawhide Kid #23 VF $135; Saint #4 GD $35; Sensation #99 VG/FN $80, #107 VG+ $180, #108 FN+ $220, #109 FN/VF $350; Star Spangled #37 VG/FN $80; Startling #20 GD/VG $90, #32 GD $55; Sub-Mariner #23 GD/VG $133; Superman #62 GD $39; Top-Notch #24 VG $85; Witches Tales #18 VG- $33, #19 GD+ $16; Wonder Woman #3 GD/VG $250; Yankee #3 VG- $75; Zoot #15 VG $75.

◆◆ CBM MarketWatch ◆◆

A report of market indicator sales (including % of Guide) by Michael Naiman

Action
#927 VG+ $233 58%

Adventure
#300 FN+ ..... $41 ..... 44%
#313 VF- ..... $13 ..... 36%

Avengers
#4 NM $1,125 75%

Batman
#[illegible] $430 66%
#[illegible] $[illegible] [illegible]
#[illegible] VF- $66 [illegible]
#[illegible] NM- $30 [illegible]
#[illegible] NM- $23 [illegible]
#[illegible] NM- $25 [illegible]

Black Cat Mystery
#45 VG $89 1.66X

Brave & Bold
#28 FN- $620 69%
#[illegible] GD $75 [illegible]
#38 FN $90 [illegible]
#80 VF ..$48 ..... 1.85X

Captain America
#53 FN- ..... $375 ..... 1.12X
#100 VF.. ..... $220 ..... 1.29X

Challengers
#5 GD $65 1.48X
#7 VG $39 44%
#8 FN $105 79%

Chamber of Chills
#12 FN $110 2.75X

Conan
#1 NM $128 67%

Daredevil
#1 GD $160 1.12X

Detective
#122 GD..... $140 ....1.25X
#327 VG $[illegible] [illegible]
#359 FN+..... $76 ..2.66X

Doll Man
#[illegible] FN+ $282 84%

Fantastic Four
#[illegible] NM $140 [illegible]
#[illegible] NM $[illegible] [illegible]
#44 FN $[illegible] [illegible]
#55 NM- $130 ....1.63X
#131 NM $23 ....3.21X
#[illegible] NM $[illegible] [illegible]
#[illegible] NM $11 [illegible]

Fight
#[illegible] VG+ $65 1.99X

Flash
#[illegible] FN $550 1.09X

Ghostly Tales
#[illegible] FN $12 1.54X

Hawkman
#[illegible] NM $340 63%

Hulk
#1 [illegible] $820 [illegible]
#4 [illegible] $445 [illegible]
#[illegible] FN+ $41 [illegible]

Iron Man
#1 FN $[illegible] [illegible]
#1 NM $475 [illegible]
#1 NM $[illegible] [illegible]
#[illegible] FN $18 [illegible]

Jingle Jangle
#[illegible] NM $25 50%

JLA
#1 FN $[illegible] [illegible]
#[illegible] VG $[illegible] [illegible]
#[illegible] $[illegible] [illegible]
#[illegible] VF $[illegible] [illegible]

Journey Into Mystery
#[illegible] $61 1.3X
#[illegible] $[illegible] [illegible]
#[illegible] NM $[illegible] 1.5X

Katy Keene
#[illegible] $30 [illegible]
#[illegible] $4[illegible] [illegible]
#[illegible] $[illegible] [illegible]
#62 VG+ ..... $30 ....1.15X
#[illegible] GD $28 1.08X

Kid Colt
#[illegible] VF $28 [illegible]
#[illegible] VG $[illegible] [illegible]

Lois Lane
#105 NM-.. $[illegible] [illegible]
#106 VF+.. $20 [illegible]

Marvel Mystery
#[illegible] GD $[illegible] [illegible]
#[illegible] GD $[illegible] [illegible]

Marvel Team-Up
#[illegible] NM $8 24%

Master
#61 VG..... $40 ....94%
#96 VG..... $25 ...Guide

Midnight Tales
#1 NM $30 [illegible]

Munsters
#1(file) NM ..... $225 ....1.13X

My Greatest Adventure
#82 FN..... $24 ....53%

Mystery In Space
#87 FN $25 45%

Mystic
#[illegible] VG+ $100 50%

Night Nurse
#[illegible] VG $15 94%

Phantom Lady
#13 VF..... $1,521 76%

Planet
#41 VG..... $55 ....40%
#55 VG..... $52 ....49%
#58 VG... $[illegible] [illegible]
#71 VF.... $[illegible] [illegible]

Rangers
#1 VG $115 [illegible]

Richie Rich
#11 VF- ..... $73 .... 55%

Ringo Kid (2nd series)
#1 NM $[illegible] [illegible]

Roy Rogers
#1 VF $575 1.13X

Scary Tales
#1 NM $25 [illegible]

Sensation
#[illegible] FN $46 [illegible]
#1[illegible] NM $[illegible] [illegible]

Showcase
#[illegible] $[illegible] [illegible]
#4[illegible] FN $[illegible] [illegible]
#43 VG+ ..... $70 ....88%
#58 GD ..... $19 ....1.27X

Silver Surfer
#[illegible] NM $453 [illegible]

Star Ranger
#3 [illegible] $195 118%

Star Trek
#[illegible] VF $385 1.52X

Strange Adventures
#[illegible] $[illegible] [illegible]
#[illegible] $95 [illegible]
#144 VF $92 42%

Strange Tales
#[illegible] $[illegible] [illegible]
#[illegible] $[illegible] [illegible]
#[illegible] $[illegible] [illegible]
#[illegible] $57 [illegible]

Sub-Mariner
#1 GD $[illegible] [illegible]

Super Friends
#1 NM $[illegible] [illegible]
#5 NM $[illegible] [illegible]

Superboy
#[illegible] VF $99 [illegible]
#[illegible] $[illegible] [illegible]
#[illegible] $[illegible] [illegible]
#100 VF ..... $33 ....30%

Superman
#53 VG+ ..... $600 ....1.28X
#57 GD+ $[illegible] [illegible]

Tales to Astonish
#37 FN $37 39%

Thing
#12 GD+ ..... $188 [illegible]
#13 VG+ ..... $154 ....1.14X
#14 VG..... $350 ....2.63X

Top Notch
#1 FN+ $915 [illegible]
#[illegible] FN+ $875 [illegible]

Weird Tales of the Future
#8 VG..... $360 ....3.55X

Whiz
#[illegible] GD $108 [illegible]
#40 FN $82 [illegible]
#68 FN $150 [illegible]

Witches Tales
#25 VG $175 [illegible]

Wonder Woman
#[illegible] FN+ $255 [illegible]
#[illegible] $46 [illegible]
#[illegible] GD $35 [illegible]

World's Finest
#[illegible] VG $261 43%
#[illegible] FN $281 56%
#[illegible] VG $130 [illegible]
#[illegible] VG+ $50 [illegible]
#[illegible] VG $30 [illegible]

X-Men
#[illegible] $965 [illegible]
#[illegible] $85 [illegible]
#[illegible] $85 [illegible]
#[illegible] NM $45 [illegible]
#[illegible] VF+ $30 [illegible]

Giant Size X-Men
#1 VF $285 95%

Zip
#1 FN..... $670 ....59%
#[illegible] FN $495 94%

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Except for popular mainstream or oddball titles, mail order is dead but for a handful of hardcore customers, and eBay has skewed sales considerably on all types of items, especially post Bronze Age comics, except for the 30¢ and 35¢ Marvel variants which continue to set record prices. Star Wars #1 VF on eBay at $724!), and truly scarce or high grade material, which always sells, no matter where you offer it.

Slightly Over-Guide Sales: Action #352 FN $10; Amazing Spider-Man #190 FN $10; Blitz Krieg #1 FN $10; Flash #182 FN $11; Flying Saucers #1 VF $28; Superman #172 VG+ $12; TV Casper #14 FN $11; X-Men #141 NM $20 #142 NM- $13, #19 VG $29.

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We have seen huge interest in 1970's Marvels and DC Comics. We recently sold a large collection of 3,000+ books from this era in a matter of days! Books were all FN to VF or

better and sold easily at full Guide. This included long runs of Amazing Spider-Man, Captain America, Daredevil, Fantastic Four, Incredible Hulk, as well as Marvel Premiere and Marvel Spotlight.

DC titles also moved very quickly, including all Batman titles and Justice League of America. Interest dropped off sharply on issues published in the 1980s, with some exceptions. Miller Daredevils all sold very quickly.

Reported Sales: Captain Marvel Jr. #49 FN $55; Daredevil #168 (1st Elektra) NM- $4; Giant Size X-Men #1 VG-$100; Uncanny X-Men #94 VG+ $100; Venus #11 (Timely, end of the world cover) GD+ $70.

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Expensive rents and manpower mean dealers must sell, not hoard! And customer service is vital, and the comic shop business just can't afford less! I maximize return through intelligent pricing, turning stock efficiently, and not hoarding. My aim is to sell 90% every month.

A shakedown in my area has left our locations the only full-service comic book stores between San Francisco and Mountain View, a 40-mile distance. When competition disappears, work becomes harder as nobody takes up the slack. Store closings cause some to stop purchasing, a disquieting trend. But with attention to detail, business continues steadily. At the San Mateo Show, I acquired 2,000 DC horror books from the 1960s and 1970s.

On December 4th, Alex Ross and Paul Dini will return for an exclusive signing of their new Batman book. Their appearance last year was a special event and very exciting!

I am also buying and selling Sotheby's-level MAD artwork. Freas, Coker, Jacobs, Drucker, and Davis will satisfy collectors awaiting the bi-annual, expensive Manhattan auctions.

Regarding the Internet, which supports sales of all material, not just low-end, if Ben Franklin were alive and dealing comics today he'd say: "The Web is like a mirror. You cannot expect an ass to peer into it and see the reflection of an apostle."

Sales: Conan #1-100 (#1 and #3 GD, #2 and #4-24 GD-VG, #25 up VF) $200; Mickey Mouse Club Magazine, set, all GD-VG $5-30 each, highest prices for Funicello covers in VG; Captain America #29 FR $95; Human Torch #7 FR $85; Superman: #20 GD $147, #25 GD $112, #30 GD $165 (1st Mxyztplk, #40 VG $170, #43 G $67, #48 VG $100, #55 VG $100 (SOTI), #57 GD $55 (Lois as Superwoman), #67 GD $53 (Perry Como).

ROB HUGHES • ARCHANGELS

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As we come to the end of the convention season and yet another year, comic books and related collectibles look strong. We released our third catalog during the beginning of the year with sales starting off slow but ending quite well. Even though the first two months see the most action, the life of a catalog lasts up to 6-8 months after its release, with requests from new customers coming in all the time.

We attended the annual San Diego Comic Convent on in August and witnessed a great deal of activity. Some sales we were involved with included: Superman #1 VG/FN $48,000; Sensation #1 VF/NM $18,000; Flash Comics #5 (New Hampshire copy) NM $6,500, #11 VF/NM $2,000, #92 ("D" copy) NM $6,500; Action #2 GD/VG $4,500; Weird Science Fantasy #29 VF+ $1,300.

Silver Age is in high demand, with many issues in NM bringing 2x Guide including some early Hulks, Fantastic Fours, and Amazing Spider-Mans. We were able to purchase a stack of comics in killer condition from the Boston collection that I believe will bring 3x Guide since you never see these issues in this high of grade. All in all, the San Diego Con was a tremendous success for buying and selling.

Golden Age Sales: All Star Comics #3 AppVG/FN $5,000; Captain America #46 AppFN/VF $750; Catman V3#2 FN $300; Detective #29 cvrless $400, #30 FN $1,840, #32 VG/FN $1,750; Jann of the Jungle #16 (Circle 8 copy) VF $175, #17 (Circle 8 copy) VF $175; Lorna Jungle Queen #1 FN/VF $175; Mystery Tales #1 FN $250; Mystical Tales #1 FN- $150; Strange Adventures #3 VF/VF+ $550, #7 FN/VF $300, #16 NM- $550, #17 (White Mtn.) NM $1,200, #19 NM- $550; Sub-Mariner #37 FN+ $325; Tales from the Crypt #31 (Gaines file) NM+ $1,500; Thrilling #64 (Ohio copy) NM- $400; Weird Science #19 VF+ $300; World's Finest #28 VF- $350, #29 FN/VF $350, #30 VF- $375, #42 VF $350.

Silver Age and Bronze Age Sales: Amazing Fantasy #15 FN $3,300; Amazing Spider-Man #1 VG $1,400, #2 (Winnipeg copy) NM- $2,800, #121 NM $120; Astro Boy #1 (Western file copy) NM $650; Challengers Of the Unknown #4 (Mohawk Valley copy) NM- $1,100; Fantastic Four #1 App FN+ $1,800, #14 (Winnipeg copy) VF+ $300, #46 (Green River copy) NM+ $200, #48 NM+ $1,200, #49 NM 4250, #50 NM- $420, #52 NM $125, #55 NM+ $250, #55 NM $250 (Green River copy); Marvel Spotlight #2 NM $180; Nick Fury #15 NM $75; Secret Squirrel #1 (Western file copy) NM $230; Silver Surfer #1 NM $650, #4 NM $400; X-Men #2 (Winnipeg copy) NM- $2,000, #8 (Winnipeg copy) NM+ $400.

A couple of final sales (especially with the phenomenal interest shown in Sotheby's recent $20 million plus auction of vintage sports material). Babe Ruth cut autograph 9/10 $900, Lou Gehrig cut autograph 9/10 $900, and Ty Cobb cut autograph 9/10 $400.

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I have been attending many regional shows in the Midwest of late in places like Denver, Kansas City, and Minneapolis. I find them to be much more relaxing than the huge shows which pass themselves off as "comic book" conventions these days, such as San Diego or Chicago.

The collectors who turn up for these smaller get-togethers are less rushed, less psyched from sticker shock and more likely to attend. They spend time at your booth looking for missing gems and going through all the boxes. People are also more willing to trade at these regional shows where they don't have so much invested into booth space.

Contrary to some others who have been reporting on Internet auctions, I find most of the action to be "bottom feeding," like at a flea market. It all boils down to who happens to scroll down the eBay lists that week whether you reach your customer or not. In the last few

months I have scaled back a lot of my e-auctions. Too much work for too little net gain.

Instead, I have been working the shows as well as my mailing list of collectors who send in want lists (I issue a full fledged catalog three times a year). I put up maybe ten tems a week on eBay when I am in town rather than the 20-30 a day I was attempting as I rediscover life away from my scanner. I would estimate maybe 80% of my business is now conducted via strictly email, but that comes from my built up list of 1,500+ steady customers. (I know my monthly phone bill has gone way down.)

Recent Sales: Ace #68 VG+ $29, #126 VF $35; Action #44 VG+ $250, #110 VG $100, #117 VG $100, #126 VG+ $100, #153 VG+ $125; All Flash #18 VG+ $180; Blondie #5 VG $14, #12 VG $8, #21 VG+ $7, #90 NM $10; Captain Marvel #32 VG+ $100, #44 VG- $50, #49 VG+ $50, #51 FN- $50, #64 VG $45, #72 VG+ $50, #78 VG+ $60, #87 VG $40, #89 VG $36, #104 FN+ $65, #108 VG+ $45, #116 VG $45, #126 VG $38, #130 (3/4 cvr) $10; Charlie McCarthy #4 FN $15, #5 VG+ $10; Comics On Parade #52 GD $10, #69 VG $15, #87 FN+ $10.

Criminals On the Run V4#7 VG+ $150; Daredevil #79 VG $8, #80 VG $8, #83 VG $8; Dixie Dugan #7 VG $7, #11 VG+ $10; Drag Cartoons #9 FN+ Toth $40, #39 VG+ $30; Freckles & His Friends #8 VG $18; Henry #2 VG+ $8; Jiggs & Maggie #13 VG $15, #15 VG- $10, #16 VG+ $15, Joe Palooka #6 VF $65, #7 FN- $30, #8 VF $50, #9 VF $50, #10 VG+ $20, #11 VF+ $40, #12 VG $15, #13 VF $35, #14 VG- $15, #15 VG- $20, #17 VF+ $40, #18 FN+ $30, #19 VF+ $40, #59 VG $10, #74 VG+ $15; Ideal #4 VG+.

Witness $100; Katy Keene Annual #3 VF $140, #4 VF- $100; Katy Keene Fashion Book #1 VG+ $100; Katy Keene Pin Up Parade #1 FN- $100, #2 FN+ $100, #3 VF $100; Ken Shannon #5 VG+ $40, #8 VG+ $50, #9 VG+ $35; King #140 VG $10; Lash LaRue #2 VG $40; Lawbreakers #9 VG $25; Lorna #13 VG $15; Marvel Family #20 VG- $35, #55 VG $20.

Military #10 VG- $175, #39 VG+ $125; Modern #76 VG+ $65; Mutt & Jeff #4 VG $100, #7 FN+ $85, #40 FN- $35, #80 VG $8, #113 VG- $3; Nancy & Sluggo #122 GD/VG $4, #131 VG $10, #148 VG $8; New Funnies #96 VG $12; Patches #10 VG $20; Police #112 VG $30, #119 VG+ $40; Popular #92 VG+ $40; Raggedy Ann #11 VF+ $75; Sparkle #7 VG $10, #32 VG $6; Sparkler #97 VG- $25; Strange Worlds #2 VG+ $100, #3 VG $90; Tip Top #87 VG $35, #159 VG+ $14; Tip Topper #2 FN $20.

True Crime #4 VG+ $200, #6 VG+ $100; Turok 4C #596 VG $100; White Indian #11 GD $15, #11 VG+ $50, #12 VG+ $50, #13 GD $15; Whiz #102 VG+ $45, #106 VG $35, #117 VF+ $100, #124 VG $35; World's Finest #84 VG+ $65, #89 VG- $40, #94 VG+ $100; Zegra #3 FN+ $150.

Undergrounds: Arcade The Comics Review #1 NM $25, #3 VF+ $15, #4 NM $5 #5 NM $5; Capt Guts #1 VF Welz $25, #2 FN+ $15, Deviant Slice #1 NM; Irons #1 MT $10, #2 NM $8; Feel Good Funnies #1 VF Stack $10; Mother's Oats #1 FN+ (3rd print) $35; Tales From The Tubes #1 NM; Griffin $100; White Lunch #1 FN $10; Zap Comics #0 VG+ (Plymell first print w/#d pgs) $500.

Comics-related items: Captain Midnight 1940 Skelly medal $25; King King 1933 Herald VF+ $1,000; A Princess of Mars 1917 McClurg First Edition VF+ hardbound $2,000; Radio Orphan Annie 1935 Ovaltine decoder manual FN $100.

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Since the summer shows, my sales have been almost exclusively Internet-based both direct from my website (www.comxdoc.com) and on eBay. These two Internet sales vehicles represent two distinct markets: the website tends to attract customers searching for harder-to-find and/or higher-grade books, who are willing to pay full retail.

Recent Sales: Authentic Police Cases #6 VG $96; International Comics #2 VF $225; International Crime Patrol #6 VG+ 110; Roy Rogers #20 VF/NM $80; Yak Yak #1 & 2 NM $100 @; Wings #76 VF/NM $110, #100 VF $100.

Perhaps more interesting is **what's happening on eBay**. Certain groups of books that do poorly or mediocre at shows (e.g., Westerns, low-grade 1950's humor books, etc.) do very well on eBay. Some of these books regularly bring above Guide prices. Recent sales include: Adv. of Bob Hope #20 VG $48; Archie #42 VG- $38; Lone Ranger #15 VG $26, #38 FN $25.

Conversely, **Silver Age superhero books** in all grades tend to bring below Guide, although there are exceptions. For example: Amazing Spider-Man #7 VG $113, #9 VG- $64, #16 FN $69.

Golden Age and Atom Age superheroes perform better than Silver, but still rarely bring full Guide. Recent sales include: Adventure #100 GD/VG $97; Batman #33 VG $100; Detective #78 GD $76, #104 VG/FN $107; Master Comics #91 VG $17. Exceptions that do bring Guide are the Mary Marvel titles and Timelys... which sell fairly well.

This eBay experience has led me to believe that the Guides and the fan press has been unduly influenced over the years by the superhero fan that dominates the comic con and show circuit. The Internet reaches a far broader spectrum of the collecting community and demonstrates the real market value of certain books previously relegated to the bargain bins.

On the pedigree front... we (in conjunction with Captain Chaos Comics) recently found an exceptional late Silver/early Bronze collection. It had more than 1,000 Marvel and DC books from 1967 to 1972 are in VF/NM to Mint condition... and contained beautiful runs of many key superhero titles plus obscure horror, mystery, adventure, and western issues. Issues have brilliant glossy covers and colors, snowy white interiors, crisp corners, and straight flawless spines. The original owner handpicked the collection while he was in junior high and high school in Akron, Ohio. He would tour a circuit of six stores weekly to get the comics before they were put into the racks. He laboriously chose only the best comics out of stacks of newly opened bundles. The books were almost never read, with the exception of one or two favorite titles. In 1971, the owner joined the Navy and became a S.E.A.L., where he served for 24 years.

Beginning in 1973 it became impractical for him to continue collecting, but, before he stopped collecting, he stored the books in a dry, climate-controlled space where the books remained for 26 undisturbed years. In honor of the original owner, we have dubbed his books the "S.E.A.L. Collection" and will show them for the first time at the Mid-Ohio Con on November 27-28.

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I specialize in Bronze Age books and that era seems to be doing well. One of the most overlooked and undervalued comics of this

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time are Marvel's 52 Page 25¢ Giants from the early '70s. I just recently discovered that a few of these books are not squarebound, but, are round bound (saddle stitched) in format. I have also noticed that more and more comic-related items such as original art and comic book memorabilia are being sought after by collectors. There is an increasing interest in Charlton's romance comics titles like Secrets Of Young Brides, Haunted Love, and Love And Romance. Speaking of Love And Romance, has anyone ever seen an issue #24 (does it exist)? No one I have talked to has ever seen the last issue of that series.

Marvel Variants? The 35¢ Marvel variants are as tough to find as a needle in a hay stack. I was lucky enough to find two of them in high grade and sold them for a few multiples of Guide and, in turn, the person who bought them from me sold them at even more multiples of Guide!

There's not much movement on superhero mainstream books from the '70s especially key books. Maybe its just me?

For me, eBay has slowed down a great deal in the last five months I imagine this has had a significant affect on the hobby. Just recently I put a Marvel Premiere #15 NM (first appearance of Iron Fist) on eBay and it did not generate a single bid even at $9.95! Yikes!

Recent Sales: For Lovers Only #60 GD- $9.95; Giant-Size Kid Colt #2 VG $15; Goth'c Tales of Love #1 NM and #2VF, the pair, $250 (Marvel romance magazines Guide for $30 each so this sale should open a few eyes!); Love And Romance #1 FN $15; Sinister House Of Secret Love #4 NM $32; Tomb of Dracula #59 (35¢ variant) NM $40, #60 (35¢ variant) NM $40; Vicki #1 VG $24; Weird Mystery Tales #1 VF $9.95.

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Sales are still decent if the books are graded accurately and strictly! The trick to win customers is to grade accurately and consistently. The dealers who overgrade will lose customers down the line.

I still get about 80% of Guide on almost all '60's superhero comics in midgrade. Low grade always does better due to lower prices. Mid grade is tough to sell but I find that if you grade a book accurately FN it is actually a very nice looking book! That is why I still believe that many collectors cal books NM that are only FN+. The FN+ grade really looks great and only allows a few light defects yet many figure it looks so good it must be NM.

Recent Sales: Beatles (Life Story, Dell) FN+ $239; Battlestar Galactica #1 NM $4.75; Castle Of Frankenstein #23 VF $18; Chili #10 FN $8, #12 VG $8; Complete Purple (Eros, Bernie Wrightson) VF $12; Daredevil #126 VG $10.50; DC Special #2 VG- $15; Droids #2 VF $15.50, #6 VF $18, #7 VF $20; Ewoks #1 NM- $15, #1 VF $11.50, #2 VF $15.50; First Issue Special #5 FN $2; Foom #4 FN- $15, #5 VF- $15, #6 VF- $15, #10 FN+ $35, #19 FN+ $10, #22 VF+ $25; From The Pit #1 (Rich Corben) VF $11; Grimms Ghost Stories #2 FN+ $3.

Hedy Of Hollywood #39 (Canadian Edition) VG $8; Hot Wheels #2 VG+ $15, #3 VG- $5, #5 FN $25; House Of Mystery #192 VF- $11.50, #193 VF- $11; Jungle Action #2 VG $10; Life Of Pope John Paul II #1 VF $3; Lil Kids #3 FN $5; Mad About Millie #11 GD $8; Millie The Model #152 VG $8, #156 GD $5, #161 GD $5, #163 GD $5, #164 VG $5, #183 GD $5; Patsy Walker #71 VG $4.

Planet Of The Apes #23 (Adventure) NM $10, #24 (Adventure) NM $10; Planet Of The Apes Magazine #1 FN $20.50, #14 FN $11.75, #15 FN $10.50, #18 FN $16.50, #20 FN $10.50, #22 FN $10.50, #23 FN $10.50, #24 FN $10.50, #25 FN $17.50, #26 FN $17.50; Popular #142 FN $10; Quick Trigger Western #17 GD+ $4.75; Ronald McDonald #1 FR $26; Showcase #104 FN+ $4.75; Star Spangled War Stories #154 VG $23.50; Star Wars 3D #1 VF $20; Wyatt Earp #8 (Atlas) GD+ $4.

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Our first comic book and comic art auction conta ned 864 lots. Just under 90% of the lots were purchased and nearly $500,000 was realized from the sale. There

were many highlights and a few records set. Horror and high-grade superhero Golden Age books did the best.

Action #23 VF $6,900, #34 FN/VF $518, #65 FN $242; Adventure #110 FN/VF $207; All Select #11 VF $2,070; All Top #8 VF/VF+ $1,553; All True Crime #26 VG+ $81; All-American #23 AppVG/VG+ $253; All-Star #4 GD $403, #6 VF/NM $2,645, #6 GD/VG $311; All-Winners #11 App GD/VG $431, #18 VF $719; Amazing Adventures (pulp) #1 FN $242; Amazing Fantasy #15 GD $1,323, #15 AppGD/VG $834, #15 FN $6,613, #15 FN/FN+ $4,888; Amazing Spider-Man #1 VG $1,150, #1 FN+ $3,335, #2 NM- $2,875, #14 VF $604, #50 NM $719; America's Best #30 VF $253; Avengers #1 VG+ $230, #4 VG $242.

Baseball Heroes #1 VF+ $863; Batman #1 AppFN $7,188, #1 AppFN/VF $10,925, #2 VG $1,725, #7 AppVG+ $604, #12 FN $575, #15 VG $460, #23 AppFN $460, #26 VF $460, #28 VF $489, #39 FN+ $230, #47 AppVG $460, #43 FN+ $489, #100 FN+ $690, #171 VF $196, #200 NM $115; Best Love #33 VF- $104; Black Magic #1 FN $460; Black Terror #23 VF $334; Blonde Phantom #15 VF $575; Blue Beetle #2 AppVG/FN $115, #14 VF/VF+ $322; Boy Commandos #1 VF- $2,185, #1 FN+ $748; Brave & Bold #23 VG/FN $81, #29 VF $978, #30 FN- $276, #34 VG+ $276; Brenda Star #14 VF $1,093.

Captain America #19 VF $2,415; Captain Rocket #1 FN $196; Catman #12 VF/VF+ (Mile High) $1,380; Comic Cavalcade #2 AppVG $207; Congo Bill #1 AppVG+ $104; Cowgirl Romances #28 (#1) VF (file) $196; Cupid #1 VF (file) $115.

Detective #19 AppFN $1,093, #20 VG $1,438, #30 FN+ $2,645, #45 FN/FN+ $1,323, #57 VF $1,208, #57 AppVG/FN $253, #58 VF/NM $6,613, #59 AppFN $334, #65 FN $604, #66 FN+ $2,415, #96 VF/NM $604, #98 VF $403, #99 VG $127, #107 VF/NM $575, #109 NM $1,035, #110 VF $334, #111 VF/NM $604, #125 VF+ $518, #184 VF/NM $546, #231 FN+ $230, #250 VF+ $334; Dynamic #14 FN+ $230, #18 VF- $288, #19 VF- $374.

Eerie #1 VF $2,645; Exciting #61 VF $345; Fantastic Four #1 AppGD+ $978, #2 FN $575, #3 VF $1,150, #6 VF/NM $1,495, #9 VF+ $834, #10 VF/NM $834, #14 VF (Winnipeg) $253, #48 VF $299; Fight #1 GD $253, #29 VF/NM (Rockford) $374; Fight *(Continued on page 72)*

THE MATT SCHIFFMAN REPORT

Oddball one-shots & Bronze last issues!

Now that we can instantly see those unseen Gold, DC Silver, Bronze Age and pulp covers online, many long dormant and undiscovered books are finding a huge audience. For years, collectors have gone begging for a DC Silver styled Gerber reference, now a good share of them are just one "click" away from more covers than they ever imagined... and in color!

Golden Age: As word gets around that Metropolis stepped up and paid handsomely for their latest GA acquisition, collectors are once again reminded of the still hidden treasures. Interest in Sub-Mariner and Human Torch has stepped up too, and Detective/Batman collectors are using this albeit brief lull in demand for the more expensive (above $300) Batman material as a chance to pick up some great books.

Golden Age Sales: The Barker #1 VF/NM $190, Action #17 GD $355, #21 AppFN $295; Batman #1 FR $4,895; Fantastic #3 FR $220; Four Color #22 GD $19; Modern #44 VF $360; Real Life #3 VG $420; Sensation #2 FN $890; Superman #1 (incomplete) $2,850; Tip Top #41 VF $350.

Atom Age: Oddball one shots and scarce last-issues are in high demand, and it doesn't seem to matter if it's Good Girl, Horror, Superhero, Funny Animal, Romance, or Western. Classic pre-Code horror and Good Girl books continue to sell well above Guide, and even the really low-grade books always find a home at below Guide prices!

Atom Age Sales: Adventure #210 GD $270; Heart Throbs #1 FN $175; Hit Comics #65 VF $155; Marvel Tales #119 FN $12; Murder Inc. #5 FN $80; Pep #60 VF $190; Sensation #107 FN $220.

Silver Age: This market continues to astound everybody and paying over Guide for certain books is back in fashion (and has been for some time). This can be shocking news for some collectors who got used to the Silver Age downtrend. High grade leads the way, but reading copies priced at Guide move just as quickly. Also there's growing demand for high grade single digit Eerie, Creepy, and Famous Monsters of Filmland.

Silver Age Sales: Atom #35 NM $65; Brave & Bold #34 GD $175; Hulk #6 GD $145; Iron Man #1 VF $285; JIM #83 GD $550; Rip Hunter #1 VG/FN $160; Showcse #4 FR/GD $1,700; X-Men #1 GD $345.

Bronze Age: Quite a few titles ended in the 1970s and these last issues are often quite difficult to find as print runs were extremely low and many titles were dropped from retail outlets because of low sales. Finding these books has become the challenge (even crusade) for some, and their consistent pursuit of these rarities has really lit a fire throughout the whole marketplace.

Bronze Age Sales: Amazing Spider-Man #129 NM- $180; Batman #244 VF $14; Bizarre Adv. #28 VF $14; Dead of Night #11 FN $9; Green Lantern #90 NM $16; House of Secrets #112 NM $18; Iron Fist #14 NM/MT $165; Legion of Superheroes #1 VF/NM $22 Rampaging Hulk #1 VF $14; The Bravados #1 VF $18; Vampirella #1 VF $310 Warlock #1 VF $7; Werewolf by Night #32 VF/NM $90; Western Team-Up #1 NM $28; Where Monsters Dwell #1 VF $32; X-Men #94 GD $75, #100 VF $46.

And then there are... pulps. Many have tried to focus the spotlight on these great volumes over the years, yet comic collectors have traditionally ignored them. But now collectors are taking a second look and are rediscovering their value. In fact, a whole new mentality about pulps is sweeping the comic hobby... to the elation of pulp dealers. In contrast, some old-time pulp collectors have voiced complaints about comic guys invading "their" hobby and causing prices to steadily escalate almost every month. But no one can deny that pulps are a great, incredibly affordable in the world of paper collectibles, and moving fast to the forefront of collector attention.

Recent Pulp Sales: Dime Mystery 8/39 $285; Jungle Stories V2#11 FN $110; Startling 3/49 FN $68; The Shadow 4/34 VG $450; The Spider 6/37 GD $310. ■

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Against Crime #20 FN/VF $1,323; Firehair #1 FN $81; First Romance #1 VF (file) $115; Flash #3 FN+ $1,093, #4 VF- $2,185, #90 NM+ $1,725; Ghost Rider #1 VF $403; Green Lantern #40 VF $219; Green Mask #1 AppFN+ $288, #1 GD $334; Guns Against Gangsters #6 VF/NM $334, #1 VF/NM (Mile High) $920.

Hawkman #1 VF/VF+ $334; Heroic #1 VG $276; Hit #1 FN+(C. Aeroplane) $2,760; Human Torch #2 FN/VF $2,185, #7 FN/VF $834; Incredible Hulk #1 VF/NM $12,650, #2 VF+ $2,185, #3 VF/NM $1,495, #6 VF/NM $1,610; Jann of the Jungle #16 VF $184, #17 VF $184; Jimmy Olsen #1 VG+ $316; Jo-Jo #7 FN $288; Jon Juan #1 FN $161; Justice Traps the Guilty #1 VF $431; Katy Keene #4 FN $81; Law Against Crime #3 FN+ $219; Lone Ranger #1 FN $2,070; Lorna the Jungle Queen #1 FN/VF $184; Love Dramas #1 VF $104; Love Lessons #1 VF+ (file) $115; Love Memories #1 VF+ (file) $115; Love Mystery #1 VF+ (file) $196; Lovelorn #1 VF (file) $173; Lovers Lane #1 VF $253.

MAD #1 VG $920; Manhunt #13 VF $138; Marvel Mystery #5 AppFN+ $5,463, #7 FN/VF $2,530, #61 FN $334, #68 VF+ $633; Meet Corlis Archer #1 FN/VF $230, #1 FN $104, #2 VF $230; Metal Men #1 VF- $161; Millie the Model #1 VF- (file) $805; Miss Fury #6 VF $460; Mister Mystery #1 AppVG $150; Monster #1 FN/VF $230; More Fun #76 VF+ $1,725, #77 FN/VF $805; My Diary #2 VF+ $161; My Love #4 VF+ (file) $345; My Love Story #1 VF (file) $219; My Secret #1 VF+ (file) $115; Mystery In Space #1 VF/NM $2,760, #5 VF+ $518, #8 VF- $334; Mystery Men #5 FN+ $748; Mystery Tales #1 FN- $207, #1 FN/FN+ $460; Mystic #5 VF $2,070.

National #16 VG+ $184; New Adventure #23 VG/FN $661; Nyoka #14 FN/VF $69; Pep #16 VF $489; Plastic Man #12 VF/VF+ $431; Popeye #1 VF- $403; Power #1 FN/VF $604, #2 VF/VF+ $1,208, #3 FN- $690, #4 VF- $403; Powerhouse Pepper #2 VF $403, #3 FN/VF $403, #4 FN/VF $345, #5 VF $518; Punch #18 VF- $403; Rangeland Love #1 VF+ (file) $219; Rawhide Kid #1 VF $288; Real Fact #6 AppFN $173; Red Ryder #1 VG $403; Rocket #1 AppVF $575; Romance Trail #1 VF/VF+ $403; Romances of the West #1 VF (file) $219; Romantic Confessions #1 VF+ (file) $173; Romantic Western #1 VF $173; Rulah #17 VF/VF+ $546.

Saint #1 FN+ $345; Shield-Wizard #1 AppVF $1,093, #2 AppVF $460; Showcase #4 FN+ $5,463, #4 VG+ $1,955, #9 VG+ $661, #34 VG $104; Silver Streak #1 GD $1,093, #18 VF/NM $633; Silver Surfer #4 NM $345; Slave Girl #2 VF+ (Larson) $431; Smash #29 FN $144; Sparkler #3 FN $115; Spotlight #2 FN/VF $334; Star Spangled #76 VF $546; Strange Adventures #9 AppFN $219, #16 NM- $633, #17 NM (WhtMtn) $1,265, #19 NM $575; Strange Mysteries #1 FN+ $150; Strange Tales #105 VF/NM $196; Superboy #16 VF $230, #19 VF+ $276; Superman #1 coverless $2,990, #8 GD $230, #10 VF- $1,208, #10 GD+ $219, #11 VG $334, #14 FN+ $2,530, #30 FN+ $633, #53 FN/VF $1,035, #100 VG/FN $299, #100 GD/VG $138; Suspense #12 VG+ $288, #12 VF $2,070, #4 VG $978; Sweet Hearts #1 NM $518; Sweetheart Diary #1 VF- $115.

Tales to Astonish #27 VF/NM $374; Terrific #5 VF $4,600; Three Stooges #1 VF/NM $1,208; Thrilling #69 VF- $219, #70 FN $104; Thun'da #2 NM- $265, #3 FN/VF $184, #1 NM $3,738, #4 VF $207; Tim Holt #1 FN+ $138; Tomahawk #1 AppVF $253; Top Notch #4 VF/NM (Larson) $1,495; Uncanny Tales #1 FN $403; Venus #10 VF $276.

WDC&S #1 AppVG- $2,070; Weird Mysteries #2 FN $518, #7 FN/VF $633; Weird Science #12 (#1) VF- $489; Wild West #1 VF+ $150; Witchcraft #5 NM- $2,415; Wonder Woman #5 VF (Rockford copy) $776, #19 VF $334, #20 VF- $431, #105 VF- $1,208; World's Finest #12 VF/VF- $431, #30 VF- $546, #42 VF $311, #91 VF $104; X-Men #1 VF+ $5,750, #2 NM- $2,070, #3 VF/NM $575, #4 VF $265, #5 VF $184; Zap #1 VF/VF+ $3,738; Zoot #7 FN $374, #11 FN/FN+ $403, #13 AppVF $196, #14 FN+ $230.

JAMIE NEWBOLD/GINO STRAGUSA

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Hello from San Diego. We've hit the slow part of the year for walk-in business at our store. End-of-summer beginning-of-school blues has affected our business. Internet sales, however, continue to hum along. We have concentrated our time on selling Under-

grounds, obscure records, popular paperback books, and a few other odds and ends which top our list of most productive sales items. We sold a significant amount of our stock at the San Diego Con and are currently looking for opportunities to purchase more stock for resale.

Significant Sales: Amazing Spider-Man #15 GD/VG $70; Avengers #3 FN $100; Conspiracy Comix (Underground) NM $70; Daredevil #4 FN $66, #5 FN $46; Witches Tales #5 GD+ $20; X-Men #1 GD+ $500, #2 GD/VG $175.

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1970's comics are on the move. For the last two or three years I have been selling my Marvels, except early pre 1965 stuff, at 50% off the marked priced. Of course, there is no need to do this with the high grade books. Kirby '70's titles are really being sought after... 2001, Devil Dinosaur, Black Panther, Machine Man, and the Eternals.

Reprint books have also been moving... Marvel's Greatest Comics, Super Action, Super-Heroes, Tales, etc. Mid '70's books like Super Villian Team-Up, Inhumans, Black Goliath, Jungle Action are also being sought after by collectors. I moved 4 out of 12 long boxes of this stock at San Diego Comic Con and also did very well with these items in Los Angeles in September.

DC titles featuring Supergirl and Wonder Woman continue to do well for me in the store, at the shows and on eBay. I believe there are so many comics for sale on the Internet that the run of the mill stuff (no matter if it's '40s-'70s) only sells if you are willing to let it go cheap. I sold some low grade 10¢ DCs and they mostly got only one or two bids starting at half Guide minimum bid. Some books on eBay will not even sell at half Guide. I was the lucky recipient of a couple of very nice buys upon returning home from the San Diego Comic Con. I got three very high grade early Showcases including #3 (VF-), #7 (VF-NM) and #8 (very strong VF). I sold the #3 and #7 immediately but have been holding out on the #8 trying to decide if I want to consign it to an auction house or just wait for a big show.

I also bought about 5,000 '70's and '80's books without realizing that there were over a hundred of the scarce and very sought after 35¢ cover variations from Marvel. I have been told that these are fetching some very high multiples of Guide and will save these until I can reach that particular market. The highlights of these books were Iron Fist #15, Godzilla #1, Logan's Run #6, John Carter #1 and many, many others. Well that's all I have to say right now, except you shouldn't be doing this if you're not having fun!

NAIMAN REPORT CONT FROM PG 66

All You Need is Love!

these books are still around!

Zap's original printer, Charles Plymell, states in his essay entitled "Curled in Character." It (Zap) was suppose to be 5,000 copies, but that's a stretch." He goes on later to say, "But it was the lack of technology which caused most of the waste in a run of what was suppose to be 5,000 copies... my guess is around 1,500. My wife, Pam says less."

Don Donahue, printer and founder of Apex Industries, recalls Zap's origins in his essay "A View from the Apex." "One evening (we're still talking about the end of '67) some friends called and asked me over to their apartment to see some home movies. They said some artist was going to be there and I might want to meet him. Of course it was Crumb. I think they told him I was a publisher, so he brought all the drawings for Zap #1. I inspected the artwork and calmly said I would print the book, although I didn't have a cent."

"I had met Charles Plymell, another Beatnik semi-legend, who had a print shop in his apartment. He was as crazy about Crumb's stuff as I was and agreed to print 5,000 copies of Zap in trade for a tape recorder that was worth about $300 and permission to put 'Printed by Charles Plymell' on the back cover.

"When Plymell finished printing the sheets, the books were folded and stapled at Crumb's apartment by Crumb, me, Dana Crumb, and friends. On Feb 25, 1968, we threw a party to celebrate the birth of Zap, featuring a cake Dana ordered with the Zap #1 cover reproduced in icing. Afterward, we all went out and sold Zaps on Haight Street. The first printing sold out rather quickly in the next few weeks."

"Meanwhile, Plymell decided to move to Canada and wanted to dump his print shop. Since I had always wanted to be a printer, I paid Plymell some cash, took over the payments, moved everything to a huge loft in the black ghetto of San Francisco, and bought a book on how to print. Soon I was struggling (believe me!) with the second printing of Zap. I replaced Plymell's name on the back cover with mine."

The low print run of first edition Zap #1s should keep current market value on a constantly rising curve. $2,500-$4,000 is an outrageous sum to pay? There's not even a Price Guide!?!?! Remember way back in 1975 when the Price Guide listed (in NM) Detective #1 for $360, Fantastic Four #1 for $120; Green Lantern #1 for $20; JLA #1 for $200; Showcase #4 for $50; and X-Men #1 $15? Take heed one and all... the train is now leaving the Underground station! Better hop on while the ticket is still affordable!

Recent Zap sales include: #0 (35¢) FN+ $31, #2 (2nd p.) VG+ $16.50, #4 (2nd p.) VG $9, #7 (2nd p.) FN/VF $8.50, #8 (1st p.) VG+ $20, #11 NM $15.50, #12 NM $21. ■

LON WEBB • DARK ADVENTURE COMICS

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This has been a banner year for us in this market! We've experienced steady and growing sales throughout the year which reached a nice pitch all through the summer shows and is still going. San Diego was our best ever with memorabilia sales our best seller. Currently, we've just completed our latest auction and have purchased and turned around a nice run

of Sensations and numerous mid-to-late '40's books before we could even process them! We simply cannot keep enough material in stock for the demand for reasonably priced books. I look for this to continue and sales to grow even more in the winter months.

What follows are some results from our 21st collectibles auction. Bear in mind these prices do not include buyer's fees.

Golden Age Sales: Black Hood #17 FN+ $138; Flash #89 GD/GD- $127; Marvel Mystery #92 FR+ $291; Pioneer Picture Stories #4 VF+ $66; Young Romance #56 FN+ $39.

Atomic Age Sales: Capt. Science #7 VG+ $118; Dark Mysteries #24 VF/VF+ $324; Haunted Thrills #18 VG $45; Horrific #2 VG- $109, #7 VF- $206; Vicky #5 (Ohio copy) VF+ $39; Voodoo #15 VF- $318; Western Advs. #5 (Ohio copy) NM- $75.

Spirit Sections Sales: My past year's sales have proved that these are simply undervalued in the Guide and very hard to locate in grade! 7/7/40 VF+ $113, 11/3/40 (Ellen black eye splash) VF $72, 12/1/40 (Spanking Ellen splash) VF- $187, 8/3/52 (1st Wood section) VG+ (VF w/tear) $535.

Silver Age Sales: Batman #200 NM- $132; Gomer Pyle #1 VF+ $73; Lancelot Link #1 NM $22; Dr. Graves #1 FN+ $20.

Modern & Bronze Sales: Hong Kong Phooey #1 VF $22; Fast Willie Jackson #2 NM- $56; Giant-Sized Spider-Man #4 (double cvr) VF $45; Pauline Peril #1 NM $35; Punisher Kills the Marvel Universe NM $43; Winnie the Pooh #1 VF+ $49.

Vintage Paper Sales: Great Comics Game Bk by John Stanley VF+ $28; Pep Stories V2#9 VF+ $61; Popular Mechanics 10/36 (Hal Foster cvr) VG $31; Original Woodstock Poster NM and signed by producers $200.

Undergrounds Sales: Best of Rip Off Press V2-1st-VF $28; Bijou #3-1st $26; Grim Wit #2 VF- $11; More Little Dirty Comics Vol. 2 VF $21; Tales From the Plague VF $16.

Fanzines Sales: Buried Treasure #1 NM $20; Comics-The Golden Age #2 NM $40; CBM #2 VF+ $48; Dynapubs Catalog '75 VF+ $27; Lone Star Fictioneer #3 NM- $15.

Original Art and Art Ephemera Sales: Neal Adams Batman figure sketch $273; Sal Buscema Sub-Mariner animation drawing $65; Jim Mooney Pussy Cat splash $319; Alex Ross Marvels #4 Set of 3 pencil prelims $665; Steranko Hulk Medallion ad pencil originals $630; Wally Wood strip MAD #46 $240; Focus on Jack Cole VF $18; J. Kirby Treasury V1 VG+ $24; Kirby Unleashed F+ $71; Rogers Batman Portfolio NM $50; Toth Sketchoook NM- $35.

Magazine, Digest & Treasury Sales: Cannon #1 VF- $27; DC-39 Secret Origins NM- $29; DC-51 Batman NM- $51; Gods From Outer Space F- $20; Hunger Dogs NM- $49; Ripley's True Ghost Stories TP VF+ $28.

DC and Marvel Memorabilia Sales: Amazing World of DC #9 VF+ $82; '62 Jerry Lewis Promo postcard NM- $25; Great Superman Book HC VF $50; '77 Our Way Super Stickers VF $26; 1971 Capt. America Iron-on NM $80; '60's Spider-Man Iron-on FN $70; '66 Marvel SH Card Set EX/M $220; Black Knight Marvelmania Poster VF+ $150; MMMS Button FN $62; '68 MSH Window Cling VG+ $357; MMMS Superhero Port w/Mailer NM- $393; '69 Hulk Queen City Record Promo NM $301.

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Here's a few observations about the market: (1) Five years from now, we will not recognize the back issue market as we now know it. It is segmented into these arms; (a) cheaper low grade copies for readers, (b) high grade, (c) scarce items, (d) local markets, (e) international markets, and (f) Internet market!

(2) Supply & demand rules the current market. Common stuff, if no one wants to read it, is good for recycling. Traditionally popular items stocked by dealers nationwide, now only sells in local markets. Guide value is irrelevant for many on harder to find low priced comics. As more go online, dealers are going to find it harder to buy scarcer cheap stuff at traditional "by the pound prices" because people will sell them themselves on Internet auctions. If you have items, that you can not find on the massive net, prices can go very high. The more that are listed, the more risk of future prices dropping.

(3) Slabbed items in other hobbies, like cards & records, are bringing record prices. A 1952 Topps baseball common, in PSA-8 (of 10) brought about 100 x Guide at $25,000! These things are happening to all hobbies.

(4) Paperbacks are fast rising in value. But the regular ERB, REH, HPL, SF that we all collected, are all still around in large quantites at one click of a mouse, at bargain prices. The paperback we and all the stores trashed for 50 years are increasing fast in price. I've recently dusted off my 10 centers, and sold many traditionally worthless pbks at $10-35 each! Comics are not much different. Items like a true NM Our Love Story #5 could potentially bring 5-10 times Guide! Anything scarce from the TV series Emergency is bringing record prices daily.

(5) Comics that appeal to non-comic collectors have the biggest future potential. I have been selling lots of animation based comics of late. I think we all underestimate the future market on these, as most are scarce... especially in high grade. I have sold Deadly Hands of Kung Fu's to Piers Anthony collectors. Trib Comic Book to Titanic collectors, MAD to POTA collectors & Tolkien collectors, Cracked to Charlie's Angels and Dukes of Hazard collectors. Guide prices are irrelivant to these fans. I reccommend that collectors watch out, and don't let 'em go at giveaway Guide prices.

(6) Fan readers are back strong! Low grades are flying. Marvel & DC need to take heed. But we need fresh new readers. The direct market killed the ID market back around 1980, when most of the non-superhero genres died. They have alienated the general public. I suggest as a start, they buy supermarket shelf space, and put out no-profit reprint digests (with generic genre titles, like; Western Comics, Love Comics, Teen Comics, War Comics, Weird & Mystery Comics, Funny Animal Comics, TV Fun Comics, Toy Comics, and Superhero comics) for a whole new gneration of readers! On the way through the checkout, these impulse buys may bring fresh faces into the market to buy other products.

Have you seen the pathetic offerings in traditional ID market stores lately? There's not much is left of this market. Only Archie digests seem to remain consistantly popular with the general public. Comics that you actually read do not seem to se l at flea markets anymore, because the general puolic has lost

interest. They should also run TV ads promoting comics! Nuff said!

(7) We have had a recent upswing in demand for Dennis the Menace and Spire Christian comics and Charlton has more & more buyers each week.

(8) What have we all overlooked all these years? Variant collectors & completists have been looking at Whitman & Canadian editions. In May through August of 1968 there were 15¢ cover price variants on all Gold Keys. Plus in pre-1980, there are many random numbered GK's with Whitman variants! There are 100+ Whitman variants of mostly Superman & Batman title DC's from 3/78-8/80! Also 1946-1955 Canadian Edition variants exist in quantities of 0 to 10 copies per book average, except possibly Dell's from 0 to 20 copies extant! There are Canadian newsstand cover price variants for; (a) Marvel 10/82-8/86 and (b) DC 10/82-9/88, on all titles that had newsstand distribution, including digests!

(9) All oddball & non-comic format items remain popular. Those without Guide listings seem to do best. Requests keep coming for digests, treasuries, paperbacks, memorabilia, ephemera, books, magazines, fanzines, and anything else most stores do not stock. The market is strong, if you have what people want, when they want it! The future of comics is good. We watch with bated breath for al the coming changes!

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Greetings from the United Kingdom (UK). Since US comics were not distributed here until late 1959, the Silver Age market has always been more significant for us than the Golden Age. However, there have long been a small number of dedicated Golden Age and 1950's collectors here. Those latter collectors have been fueled by knowledge of some of the US titles from the 1950's UK reprints, mostly black and white, or curious about earlier issues of titles that lasted into the Silver Age, such as the DC Big Three, or earlier incarnations of favourite characters, such as those found in Timely and Fawcett books.

Over the last five years in particular, UK collectors have become more aware of the range and diversity of Golden Age and 1950's material, and more books from these periods have started appearing at shows and in auctions, and in a few shops. Although there are still only a handful of significant dealers of such material in the UK, genres such as horror (particularly pre-Code, of course) and science fiction, crime, romance, western, and teen humour have ardent followers. War comics are perhaps less favoured, while funny animal books are seemingly more popular in the rest of Europe than in the UK.

1950's Good Girl books and jungle girls are more appreciated over here right now than ever before and Fox titles receive as much attention as they appear to get in the US. Overall, there is a strong market for the esoteric and oddball.

The strongest market is still for superhero material, although this is more true of the Silver Age and the period of the mid-late 1950s immediately leading up to distribution over here. Golden Age issues of Batman, Superman, and Wonder Woman titles will always find homes, whilst Timelys and Atlas superhero titles are both harder to come by and to sell. Other Golden Age superhero books are often slow movers due to high prices. There are fewer UK customers for the high end of the market. However, we are finding that our UK customer base is being supplemented by customers from Europe… particularly Germany, France, & Greece. (No orders at the shop here, yet, from R. Crumb's chateau in France!)

Having read in CBM of the influence of eBay on the market, we recently started selling by this method, paying particular attention to careful description of our auction lots, and have been pleased with the results. We have successfully sold many books to the US and Canada and have thus been able to reach a much wider audience.

Bronze Age material has really taken off for us during this past year, with short-run Marvel titles and obscure DC taking the lead.

Horror and romance are very strong, and the irregular format books such as digests and treasury editions are snapped up by customers as quickly as we can get such material.

There has been much publicity in the UK trade press about the death of back issues sales in shops. However, we have found that as far as Silver Age is concerned, the market is strong for ALL grades, providing that the books are well-presented, tightly and accurately graded, and fairly priced. These factors, plus keeping as wide and diverse a range of stock as possible, and being aware of the specific wants of regular customers, are the keys to a successful vintage back issue business.

Golden Age/Atom Age Sales: All Star #25 VG- $150; Crimes By Women #54 VG+ $30; Jet Powers #4 VG/FN $80; Jimmy Olsen #2 VG+ $180; My Life #4 VG+ $55; Mystery In Space #9 VG- $55; Strange Adventures #9 GD+ $256; Sub-Mariner #36 GD- $96; Superman #109 VF- $120; Whiz #63 FN $40, #67 FN- $41; Wings #60 VF- $65.

SilverAge/Bronze Age Sales: Classics Illustrated (British) #158A (Dr No) AppVG $96; Adventure #304 FN+ $42; Batman #132 VG $32, #135 VG $32; DC 100 Page Super Spectacular #6 GD+ $17; Flash #129 VG $53; JLA #1 FN- $768; Metal Men #4 FN+ $34; Showcase #37 GD $55, #39 VG+ $67, #40 VG $56; Wonder Woman #211 VG/FN $12, #217 FN/VF $15; Avengers #5 FN- $61; Daredevil #3 VG+ $69; Fantastic Four #26 VG $75; Hulk #3 GD $112, #104 VF $43; Patsy & Hedy Annual #1 GD $12; Amazing Spider-Man #19 VG+ $80, #21 FN $87; X-Men #1 GD+ $400; Giant-Size X-Men #1 FN $192.

Opinions expressed in CBM Market Reports are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them. Seasoned hobbyists are acutely aware that prices vary based on geographic location, time of year, and a number of other marketplace factors.

Continued from page 9

one with a back cover ad and a second with the ad replaced by a one-page gag. We postulated that the version sans ad was printed for Canadian sales. I'm wondering if your info might suggest even more Dell Giant variant possibilities… back cover ad and higher price… no back cover ad and higher price… back cover ad and standard price… no back cover ad and standard price! Sheesh, all these years I thought I had a handle on Dell Giants. Well, it just goes to show ya that there's always something new to discover in this wonderful hobby!

Just like the good old days

Late in 1981 was when I first became active in comic book collecting. My first exposure to comic books was Richie Rich, but until 1981 I wasn't a collector.

By the late '80s and early '90s I become disenchanted with the hobby, not only because of what I considered to be the poor quality of new issues, but also because of the tremendous upswing in prices of the older material. Anyway, by 1995 I had pretty well gotten out of the hobby, but not before picking up the first 10-15 issues of a new and exciting publication called Comic Book Marketplace. Sure wish I still had these issues, but unfortunately they went the way of many of my comic books!

In June I bought the latest issue of the Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide and saw an ad for CBM. It made me reflect on my past collecting and those special issues I had once had. I obtained an issue… it was just like the good old days. Since then I have tried to keep up with the new issues, through a comic book shop in Utah, and have really enjoyed each one.

I guess the main point of this letter is to let you know how much of an impact CBM has had on me since it came out. It almost kept me in the hobby earlier on, and it has served to renew the interest that was lost. Also, compliments to your entire staff for putting out, month after month, a quality publication. Keep up the good work!

Ron Ballard, Nevada

Big Town Photos!

While rummaging around at the flea market the other day, I happened across some vintage photos (origin unknown) of a man reading comic books in his bunk on an army base and reading to a little girl. I remember when I was in the army that I used to love reading comic books, too, so I took some time to look through a rather large stack of army photos thinking that I might find one of someone reading a vintage comic… and, lo and behold, I did! It looks like he has folded the comic cover back on itself (like we all did back then) in the bunk pictures, so it's no wonder that comics didn't stay in good shape. In the picture with that beautiful old radio, he's clearly reading a copy of Big Town… perhaps Michelle Nolan can help us identify which issue.

At any rate, I thought your readers might enjoy seeing these great old pics, since vintage photos are so hard to find.

Howard Bender, New Jersey

Stunned me

The cover to CBM #71 really stunned me. I just loved seeing that black and white Joe Shuster cover and the accompanying article was an eye opener. I've always heard about the ashcans but never saw one reproduced… or so I thought. The ashcan for Action Funnies was printed in Ron Goulart's The Great History of Comic Books and I remember being very curious as to where it came from. Thanks for providing the helpful information.

Your magazine is a sheer joy to read. But there is one thing I wanted to comment about. In CBM #70 you ran the Batman retrospective in the color section and you printed it sideways so that the whole section could be in color. I would have preferred if you had printed the article in the normal format as you did with the Superman retrospective but with all the pages in color and simply raise the price of that particular issue. I think your readers, who are collectors and lovers of comics, would have preferred to pay extra for the magazine.

Thank you for producing such a wonderful magazine and I look forward to future issues, especially Carmine Infantino in issue #75… Yeah!

Thelmon Baggett, California

Price hikes are always perplexing. For example, we've been struggling with the extra cost of the Gerber sticker project for a while now. But the topic of your letter, price, does allow me the opportunity to announce our plans for the next couple of months so that it won't come as a total surprise to CBM readers.

Based on our recent phone survey and written feedback from dozens of readers like you, we've decided to try a couple of experiments with CBM, primarily to accelerate the Gerber sticker project. For three months in a row, we will be publishing issues with a higher price… CBM #74 (Gerber sticker set #2, standard page count, out in November) will cost a dollar more; CBM #75 (our 75th issue anniversary edition, 120 BIG pages, Gerber sticker set #3; out in December) will be 9.95; and CBM Special Edition #3 (best of CBM #22-26, index to CBM #1-75, Gerber sticker set #4, 120 BIG pages, out in January) is 12 bucks. After that, the issues return to our normal format and our regular price of 5.95.

So for all our readers with sticky(!) budgets, take heart… if you can hang in there for just a little while, all will be back to normal after the holidays!

And another thing… I keep getting letters and calls from several readers who purchased CBM Special Edition #2 (with Gerber sticker set #1), who won't cut out their gal dern Gerber stickers and put 'em in their gal dern Gerber Photo-Journals! To this group I say (a) there's no number on the furshlugginer stick-

er page so when you remove it, there's no effect on the continuity of the mag and (b) the furshlugginer stickers are beautiful… once you put them in you can hardly tell there's even a sticker on the page!

CBMemories

You might just as well call your publication Comic Book Memories. You usually seem to publish what I enjoy reading and seeing, from the Silver and Bronze Ages I grew up with, to the Golden Age I've always admired.

In my younger days, when I saw a really neat comic, I would buy an extra issue or two. I bought three of Iron Man #1 and three of Iron Man & Sub-Mariner #1. When I decided to sell my Iron Man collection at the 1997 Chicago ComicCon, I approached a small dealer on the morning of the first day of the Con. He was genuinely interested, but said he didn't have the cash for a buy, yet, and that I should see him the next day after he made some sales.

Well, I sold my Iron Man collection, including two copies of Iron Man & Sub-Mariner #1, to a large dealer for a higher percentage of Guide than I expected to get anywhere else. However, I kept one copy of Iron Man & Sub-Mariner #1 and gave it as a free gift to the first smaller dealer for being so sincerely interested in my Iron Man collection. Sometimes it's about money, but not always.

Thanks for all the great images. And it's wonderful to see my favorites, including Carmine Infantino, Murphy Anderson… and Jim Steranko!

Tony Kowalik, Illinois

Joe Maneely & Love Tales #59

CBM #72… What a great issue! Possibly my favorite yet! I want to weigh in with a few points.

1) Will Murray's incredibly informative pre-hero piece was the most comprehensive look at this wonderful period in Marvel's history yet published. Great, great research and a fine job tying it all together. The mention of Joe Maneely's possible contributions had he lived got me writing some thoughts on Joe Maneely, an artist who deserves his own extensive article.

Joe Maneely died June 7, 1958. He fell between the cars of a New York to New Jersey commuter railroad train. He was 32 years old and left a young wife and very small daughters. He had recently bought a new house in New Jersey, and a new car, and was just starting to make some decent money as a comic book artist. He was a relentless workhorse, which some say helped contribute to his death. The tragedy financially devastated the family and his wife never recovered from the loss of her husband.

Joe was also one of the artists closest to Stan Lee, the nearest thing to a partner Lee ever had up to that time. It was Stan, who upon seeing Joe's raw talent back in 1950, suggested Joe take some formal art courses to polish his craft. It paid off beautifully. They worked on tons of stories and features together, started the Black Knight, Joe drew all the stories in the first three issues, art that was just wonderful, and even helped launch a MAD copycat magazine, SNAFU, in 1955. Joe then went on to become the line's greatest and most prolific western artist.

When Atlas imploded, Maneely went over to DC, Charlton, and Feature/Crestwood, as well as working for magazines like Cracked and Loco. Also after the implosion, Joe again worked with Stan, on the syndicated newspaper strip Mrs. Lyons' Cubs. Released by the Chicago Sun-Times Syndicate, it appeared in the Fall of 1957 and ran up until Joe's death, after which Al Hartley took the art over for a short while before the strip died in 1958. Stan and Joe were planning other features together when Joe died.

Strangely enough, Joe Maneely's cover art continued to appear on many Atlas issues right up to Dec '58 cover dates, all months after his death. Whether these were done "new," new meaning after Apr '57, and not old inventory (as was most of the immediate post- implosion content), is not clear. Unfortunately, work would resume regularly in Aug '58, two months after Joe died. This work resumption was the dawn of the pre-hero era of Marvel. Jack Kirby had returned along with Steve Ditko and the era of sci-fi/fantasy and monster stories would begin a run to ultimately birth the Fantastic Four and the Marvel world we know.

I'm thoroughly convinced Joe Maneely would have been a part of this birth. He was too close to Stan to not be a part. As for whether Joe could have handled the heroes? I believe so. Look at the great John Romita. Prior to his Marvel hero debut on Daredevil and his eventual taking over Ditko's Spider-Man, his superhero work consisted of some journeyman Captain America stories in 1955 for the Atlas hero revival. Same goes for Don Heck, Gene Colan and John Buscema. They never gave a hint on how good they would become in the Marvel Age. Joe Maneely at this time was the Atlas star (yes, I know, Bill Everett, too). Maneely was the most prolific and fastest artist Stan had.

I'm still in the midst of compiling a total story index but what I'm seeing staggers the imagination in terms of quantity and quality. Sure Marvel wouldn't have really existed without Jack Kirby's grand vision and scope but Joe would easily have been a co-creator with Ditko. It's easy to really see that his best years were still ahead of him. He would have done fine. What a

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shame. He was only 32 years old and possibly had drawn more pages than even Jack Kirby up to a comparable age.

2) Michelle Nolan's yearly look at books that may not exist is always a treat. I want to shed some additional light on the Love Tales #59 subject. The fourth longest running Timely/Atlas romance title, as Michelle relates, featured an almost 29 month hiatus between issues #58 (Aug '52) and #60 (Feb '55), with no apparent issue #59. Let's look a little closer at this though.

Issue #58 (Aug '52) was a normal pre-Code issue featuring art including Mike Sekowsky, Morris Weiss, and Jay Scott Pike. I'm going to guess the cover possibly is Alice Kirkpatrick, who was penciling a lot of romance stories for Atlas in 1953-54. When the series resumes, issue #60 (Feb '55) is another pre-Code issue showcasing a cover by Vince Colletta who by now was Atlas' #1 romance cover artist, and had been since the Spring of 1954.

Inside though is something very interesting. Three stories which hail from 1949 are found, including one penciled by Mike Sekowsky again and one penciled by Russ Heath and possibly inked by Chu Hing. These two (and a third) are obviously six year old inventory or even possibly reprinted stories.

My suspicions that these are possibly reprints are bolstered by what we see next. Issue #61 (Apr '55), a post-Code issue, contains another Vince Colletta cover but inside are three more stories from 1949! Two of these stories "are" reprints. The first, "Who Was... The Other Girl!" was a reprint and re-title of the John Buscema/ Vince Alascia story "The Other Woman!" from Faithful #1 (Nov '49). The second story "Love Thief!," quite possibly featuring Buscema pencils again (very hard to tell), was reprinted lock, stock and barrel from Faithful #2 (Feb '50). The final story was a 1949 era Mike Sekowsky penciled story. By #62 (Jun '55) all is back to normal and proper 1955 romance stories begin.

So what does all this mean? An issue that seems to not exist (#59), a 29-month hiatus between issues, and two issues filled with six-year-old inventory and at least two reprinted stories. I'm not really sure. Atlas would use inventory at least one additional time. The short-lived western title Western Thrillers (1954-55) featured western inventory from 1949-51 also. It just seems likely that somebody fouled up the numbering when the romance series resumed. Why they stocked the first two "return" issues with reprints and/or old inventory is anyone's guess. If Stan Lee, or whoever was editing the romance line at the time, lacked new stories, why add the title onto the schedule at all? Very strange.

Dr. Michael J. Vassallo, New York

Fuming about PulpCon Report

Been reading CBM for quite a number of years now but this is the first time that I've felt obligated to send a letter of commentary. Issue #71 was one of the best reads so far, excellent primary research material on the early ashcans. Great article on the Golden Age Larson Collection and also on the Unknown Golden Age Comic Publisher. But your printing of the 1999 "PulpCon Report" made me completely lose my top, one of the few times I've actually started to fume over a column of opinion and observation.

While the article is OK information-wise on some high prices realized, the main and most obvious thing that was not mentioned is the friendship and camaraderie to be had at this convention. I've been attending PulpCon for about five consecutive years and as time goes by and my knowledge of the pulps grow, this convention becomes a place to go see good friends that you only see once a year.

Sure you find great pulps there and spend money, but it is the only place where you can go that has a large congregation of collectors and researchers that don't look at you funny when you start rambling about your favorite obscure author. Most everyone that has been into the pulps for any length of time actually cares about the magazines and not only the potential money they might make by hoarding them.

I really hope that this recent boom of interest from the comic field doesn't sour my interest in these magazines by making prices rise abnormally. I hope that the folks that buy these items only for their cover art and "eye appeal" will soon grow weary of the fact that you have to actually open the magazine to the inside pages and READ what is going on inside there.

Rob Preston, via E-mail

Out the top floor window

Have to say I was somewhat disappointed after reading CBM #71. But before you throw yourself out the top floor window, take heart. The articles were uniformly interesting as usual. The cause of my displeasure was actually nothing more than your lack of response to Link Yaco's letter and his query regarding the identity of the artist responsible for the excellent JSA cover of issue #69. I was mightily impressed by that illustration, so much so that when I saw a T-shirt carrying the same picture I immediately added it to my wardrobe. So, please tell us... who drew it?!

Dale Coe, via E-mail

The mystery artist is none other than the talented Dave Gibbons, who originally did the work for All-Star Archives #3. I thought Dave's rendition was excellent, too.

Back issue help, please

Hello there, and thank you for putting out such an excellent magazine. I e-mail you now to make a suggestion. I like your "best of" editions but feel that they are only a small part of the story. I would suggest reprinting in full issues #1 through at least #25, the hardest to find issues of the CBM run. In fact, I'm sure many readers would bump that number up to at least issue #50. I suggest this not only as a desperate collector having terrible luck tracking down early issues, but also as a handy suggestion to boost sales for CBM. I am confident that there are thousands of comic collectors out there who, like me, would hungrily snap up these reissues.

Of course, such a project would be crippled without the inclusion of the six Overstreet Quarterlies which are a key part of the continuity. I was lucky enough to buy all but #4 off the racks way back when, but my inability to find that darn #4 since then tells me there are a lot of frustrated folks out there who would snap up

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reprints of these as well.

Somebody dig up the master plates and turn on the presses! Keep up the good work,

Karl Koch, via E-mail

The film (and plates) for CBM #1-21 and Overstreet Quarterly #1-6 are long since destroyed so their resurrection would be miraculous, and likely impossible. We are trying our best to answer the many reader requests for CBM reprints of CBM #22 and up with our CBM Special Edition series. Issue #2 went on sale last Spring and contains material from CBM #22-24. Special Edition #3 goes on sale in January and contains the remaining material from CBM #22-24 and a nearly all the contents from #25 and 26.

Although providing enough back issues to meet demand has been a real headache for us, there is some good news. As interest in fanzines continues to explode, more and more mail order dealers, website sellers, and eBay hucksters are putting CBM back issues on sale as they acquire them in collections, so perhaps finding them will get a little easier. Good luck with your search, Karl, and thanks for writing.

Horror-Go-Round

Last issue (CBM #73), Lynn Russell wrote in asking about the Horror-Go-Round comic. If he'll look in the same issue in the color section of issue #73 (page 40, lower left) he'll find a picture of the Spokane copy of Strange Stories from Another World #2 which has a "Horror-Go-Round" cover and story. I'll bet that it's the long lost issue that contains his wife's well-remembered story.

Alan Bartholomew, Arizona

At least not yet

Just perused CBM #73, and I must say that the cover gallery of those pre-Code horror books is the best you've done so far, bar none! Pre-Code horror is by far the coolest part of the hobby, and every time you print something on it, you hit a homerun!

By the way, the merchandise I've ordered from eBay so far has been reasonably well graded, and the prices are right! So, the bad experiences some have had may be decreasing. I did have one bad experience with a guy who auctioned a pre-Code horror book without reserve, and then chose to ignore me when the book received only my minimum bid! But at least I haven't been ripped off, at least not yet.

Well, have to run! Keep up the good work, and continue the pre-Code horror articles and galleries!

Larry Sutliff, via E-mail

I love Lamont

Would like to convey how much I enjoyed issue #71. I look forward to every issue of CBM, but #71 was a virtual cornucopia of facts and fun.

I greatly enjoyed Jon Berk's Lamont Larson article. It was particularly interesting. It is stuff like that that adds a sense of history, and a special flavor to the hobby. I love reading and collecting Dell Giants, especially "Western Round Up" and any with Loony Toon characters. When I see that one of the puzzles or games have been completed inside by a past reader of the comic I wonder if the original reader of the book way back in 1952 did the puzzle. For me it adds a sense of history of that book. I wonder who owned it, where they bought it from, things like that. So, I can see the importance of the Larson Collection. It sounds to me that Mr. Larson should be invited to some of the major conventions, and discuss the history of his collection on a panel.

As always, I enjoyed Michelle Nolan's article. Good stuff! What I would like to see in future issues of CBM are western themed issues. And an in-depth interview with Dick Ayers would be very nice, too. Westerns, in my opinion, are really ignored these days, and should be recognized. The wonderful work Bill Black/AC Comics has been doing with his reprint western books should be noted, too.

Thanks again for a high quality publication. Keep it up.

Steve Ogden, Maryland

I couldn't agree more... Bill Black should get a lot more recognition for his efforts reprinting vintage stories. My favorite AC Comics series is "Men of Mystery." If any CBM reader would like to contact Bill personally, to say thanks and/or to find out about his many GA reprint projects, he can be contacted at (407) 767-0199 or you can write to him at Box 521216, Longwood, FL 32752. Bill's website is accomics.com. Let Bill know you appreciate his efforts to supply inexpensive GA reprints!

X-51... Spooky!

Don't suppose I'm the only reader to have spotted this, but just in case, here goes: The one-page "Iron Man Mystery" on page 24 of CBM #72, reveals a picture of the original splash page of the first Iron Man story with margin notes. I was struck, when seeing this, of the margin note/job number "X-51." Why did this ring a bell? Of course! Kirby's creation, Machine Man, another kind of "iron man" was (still is!) X-51!

Weird coincidence? An amazing feat of memory on the part of Kirby or someone else at Marvel?... Spooky!

Victor Caulfield, via E-mail

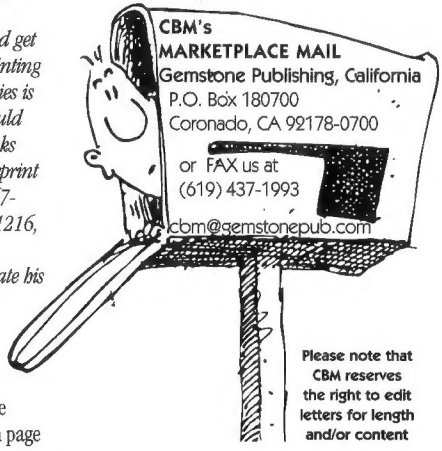
A blessing and a curse

Re: Naiman Report in CBM #73 on a possible price guide for undergrounds, fanzines, pulps, and original art. Speaking as a collector and a retailer, it would be both a blessing and a curse.

Pricing these items with an official air removes some purchaser doubt and adds a touch of finality to the ever-increasing price speculation going on. Good for collectors. On the other hand, I've enjoyed the surprising profits from the retail sales of undergrounds and fanzines we've gotten our hands on. Prices that are enthusiastically paid over the Internet by avid collectors set the final price.

The above-listed genres are growing in popularity. A true pricing structure, could add a new wrinkle to our hobby. Suddenly, eBay shoppers are hovering over the "submit" button while they rifle through the Original Art Price Guide, deciding if that purchase is a good deal! A new price guide will become a necessity—just like during the '70s when everyone seemed to walk the convention floors with dog-eared Overstreets holstered under their arms like a detective's pistol!

Jamie Newbold, California



Please note that CBM reserves the right to edit letters for length and/or content

Original Owner Collection acquired by PCE

LOS ANGELES—An original owner comic collection (named the Pacific Coast Collection) has been acquired for sale by the Pacific Comic Exchange. The collection of more than 7,000 books contained mostly virtually unread copies and nearly complete runs of most major comic books published between 1962 and 1977. Using PCE's grading system, the average grade for all books is Near Mint plus with off-white to white pages. The collection acquired its name because the original owner (who purchased the books right from the newsstand) lived on the Pacific coast of California most of his life.

"While it is rare to find complete runs of major comic book titles from the early 1960s through the 1970s, it is even more unusual to find copies that have virtually no wear other than handling defects," said Robert Roter, President of PCE. Roter pointed out that "in addition to excellent structure, most of the books contain white pages and glossy covers. The Pacific Coast Collection contains many excellent books, including already-sold copies of *Amazing Fantasy* #15, *Amazing Spider-Man* #1, and the *Incredible Hulk* #1. The collection also included Mint copies of *X-Men* #1 and *Tales of Suspense* #39. For further information, contact Robert Roter at (310) 544-4936.

Alex Ross to make rare West Coast appearance

PALO ALTO—On Saturday, December 4th, 1999, the talented Alex Ross and Paul Dini will be returning to Lee's Comics (3783 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, CA) for an exclusive signing of their new Batman book. Hester said, "Alex and Paul's appearance last year was a great event and I'm looking forward to bringing these talented creators back to the Bay Area." Ross and Dini will meet and greet fans from 2-5:00P.M. For more information contact (650) 493-3957.

Remaining Bethlehem Pedigree books surface!

NEW YORK—The remaining high grade comic books from the "Bethlehem Collection" (of central Pennsylvania collector Stanley Pachon) have surfaced, thanks to dealer/collector Marnin Rosenberg.

The original portion of the Bethlehem Collection—named as a result of a store stamp from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on the back of the 1950's comics—was uncovered in 1991 (as first reported way back in *CBM* #7).

Pachon's 18,000 books from 1940-1969 were an amazing find, and featured an enormous number of NM Silver Age books, including one of the best known copies of *ASM* #1.

Marnin Rosenberg explained that the individuals who originally discovered the collection repaid their financial backer in comics rather than cash, specifically with titles that they considered less desirable. Interestingly, the backer was pleased with the material he received because they were the titles which he liked the most. He felt the deal was very fair.

This last-to-surface portion of the Bethlehem Collection includes mainly sci fi, pre-Code horror, fantasy, crime, and war... many of the most in-demand genres.

For collectors, the occasion marks the first time such a large group of "Atom Age" Bethlehem books will become publically available.

Rosenberg commented, "Unlike so many major deals involving high-grade pedigree comics, this one involved a particularly friendly person who was a pleasure to work with. The transaction took place over nearly a decade... and the owner really cherished these comics."

Many of the Bethlehem books are purported to be the nicest copies in existence. Rosenberg's company *Collectors Assemble!* will be offering an amazing 4,000 Bethlehem comics.

Shortly after Thanksgiving 1999, the Bethlehem books will become available for sale via website www.comicollectors.net and via advertisement in *CBM*. Marnin Rosenberg can be reached at (516) 466-8147.

As the local newspaper reported upon discovering the Bethlehem comics: "Mr. Pachon, a nationally-recognized collector of Horatio Alger books, had printed materials of every kind stacked to the ceilings of his house, from the basement to the attic... (he had) a love for those items which preserved modern Americana in a rare tribute."

FACING COLOR PAGE: John Fallon picks his top 12 Gil Kane classics (continued from his article on page 20):

TOP ROW: **T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents #14 (Jul 1967); Undersea Agents #5 (Oct 1966); T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents #15 (Sep 1967)**

MIDDLE ROW: **Tales of Suspense #88 (May 1967); Avengers #37 (Feb 1967); Tales to Astonish #89 (Feb 1967)**

BOTTOM ROW: **The Adv. of Rex, the Wonder Dog #37 (Jan/Feb 1958); Green Lantern #45 (Jun 1966); Hawk & Dove #5 (Apr/May 1969)**

NOT PICTURED: **Atom #36 (Apr/May 1968); Mystery In Space #8 (Jun/Jul 1952); Strange Adventures #12 (Sep 1951)**

GIL KANE CLASSICS (see page 20)

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